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# WAR- CHRONICLE

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PICTURES OF THE WAR



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# Speech made by Herrn von Bethmann Hollweg, Imperial Reichskanzler, at the Opening of the Reichstag 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1914.

His Majesty the Kaiser who is at present on the battlefield with his troops, has asked me to bring his best wishes and most sincere greetings to the German peoples' representatives with whom he is so closely united, in all storms and dangers in the one common cause, the welfare of the "Vaterland" as long as he lives. (Lively applause.) At the same time he has asked me to convey his thanks to the nation for the unparalleled sacrifice and devotion, as well as the enormous amount of work, which on the field and at home, all classes have accomplished and will continue to do. (Loud applause). Our first thoughts too turn to the Kaiser, the Army, the Navy, and our soldiers, who are fighting for Germany's honour on the battlefield and the high seas. (Great applause.) Our eyes turn to them full of pride and confidence, as well as to our Austro-Hungarian brothers-in-arms, who fight the great fight with their traditional courage in true unity with us. (Long and lively applause.)

Quite recently an ally joined us in this fight, which was forced upon us, who knows that *with the destruction of the German Empire her own independence as a state would be at an end.* (Lively cries of Hear! Hear!) And no matter how powerful the coalition which our enemies have brought to crush us, let us hope that they will be made to feel that the arm of our brave ally can reach the weak parts of their world power. (Great applause).

On 4<sup>th</sup> August, the Reichstag proclaimed the firm wish of *the entire German people* to take up the fight forced upon us and defend our independence to the end. Since then great things have been achieved.

Who can enumerate the heroic and glorious feats of the different armies, regiments, squadrons, companies, cruisers, and submarines, in a war whose line of battle extends all through Europe, through the whole world? The future will relate and appreciate it. In spite of the enormous numerical superiority of our adversaries, the incomparable bravery of our troops has brought the war into the enemies' countries. There we stand firm and strong, and can look forward to the future full of confidence. (Storm of applause.) But the strength of the enemy's resistance is not yet broken. We have not yet accomplished our task. The nation will prove itself equal to this demand in the same spirit which it has shown up to this, for we must and intend to continue the struggle in which we are engaged, surrounded by enemies, to a good end. (Great applause.)

Then too, shall we consider the injustice which has been shown our defenceless kinsmen, in a way incompatible with all civilisation, *for the world must know that no one shall harm a hair of a German's*

*head with impunity.* (Enormous applause and clapping.) When the conference on 4<sup>th</sup> August was over, the Ambassador of Great Britain appeased here, to bring us an ultimatum from England and in case of its being at once rejected, to hand over the declaration of war. At the time I could not express myself as to my feelings at this decision of the British Government's, but to-day I can make some remarks. We see clearly the responsibility for this the greatest of all wars. (Quite right!)

The exterior responsibility must be laid in the hands of the men in Russia, who ordered and carried out the general mobilization of the entire Russian army, the interior responsibility, however, lies in the hands of the Government of Great Britain. (Lively applause.)

The Cabinet in London could have prevented this war, if it had declared distinctly in Petersburg that England did not wish a continental war to be the outcome of the Austro-Servian conflict. (Lively applause.) In this case France would have been obliged to prevent Russia from taking war measures. But then our intervention between Vienna and Petersburg had succeeded.

England was aware of a small but powerful group around the Czar. It saw the wheel beginning to turn, but did not attempt to stop the spokes. England let it be known in Petersburg that she was on the side of France and thereby on Russia's. That has been clearly and irrefutably proved by the different Cabinets' publications, especially by the English Blue Book. But now there was no holding Petersburg. Of this, we have the most artless proof. We are in possession of a report sent by the Belgian Chargé d'Affaires in Petersburg dated 13<sup>th</sup> July, 1914. I have had this report published. The Belgian Chargé d'Affaires explained:—"To-day it is thought almost with certainty in Petersburg that England will assist France. This assistance is of enormous importance and has conducted not a little, to give the military party the upper hand. English statesmen repeatedly assured in Parliament till the middle of the summer, that England had no contracts, no conventions which were binding. If war should break out, England could decide whether it wished to take part in same or not."

If then, neither conventions, alliances, compulsion, nor danger to the country, induced the English statesmen to conjure up this war,—then, *there remains only one other reason*, the Cabinet in London allowed this war to take place, because it seemed opportune for destroying the vitality of its greatest economic rival, in conjunction with the other Entente allies. (Stormy applause.) England and Russia are responsible for this war, this catastrophe which has fallen on Europe and the whole world. (Lively applause.)

The Belgian neutrality—which England pretended to protect—is a sham. (Renewed lively applause.) On 2<sup>nd</sup> August, at seven o'clock in the evening we let it be known in Brussels, that the French war-plans of which we were aware, made it imperative for

us, for our own existence, to march through Belgium. *But on the afternoon of this same 2<sup>nd</sup> August before our demarche in Brussels was or could be known, England had assured France of its assistance, unconditional assistance, in case the German fleet should attack its coast.* (Lively Hear! Hear!) Not a word was mentioned here referring to the Belgian neutrality. (Applause and Laughter.) This fact is affirmed, by the explanation which Sir Edward Grey, on 3<sup>rd</sup> August delivered in the English House of Commons, and of which I, speaking here on 4<sup>th</sup> August was ignorant, on account of telegraphic communication being cut off. The fact is again affirmed by the English Government's Blue Book. How could England maintain that it had drawn the sword because we had violated Belgian neutrality! (Lively applause and cries:—English hypocrites!) *How can the English statesmen, who knew of the past, talk of Belgian neutrality!* (Lively applause.) When on 4<sup>th</sup> August I spoke of the wrong we did by marching into Belgium, then it was not known with certainty, whether the Belgian Government in the hour of need would not see its way to spare the country and withdraw under protest to Antwerp.

Lüttich having been taken, our military authorities again sent a communication to Brussels. The possibilities of such developments had to be upheld for military reasons on 4<sup>th</sup> August, at all costs. We then had signs of Belgium's guilt. Positive written proofs were wanting, but the *English statesmen knew of these proofs.* (Lively Hear! Hear! and assent.)

When now, it has been proved by the documents found in Brussels and published, how and for what motives Belgium sacrificed its neutrality to England—the whole world can clearly see two facts: “*When our troops marched into Belgium on the night 3<sup>rd</sup>—4<sup>th</sup> August, they were in a country which had perforated its own neutrality in regard to England.*” (Stormy assent.)

And a further fact is proved—Not on account of Belgium's neutrality, which England herself had undermined, did England declare war on us, but because with the help of the two greatest military powers on the Continent she wanted to destroy us. (Stormy applause.) Since 2<sup>nd</sup> August, since the promise of assistance to France, England was in reality not any more neutral, but was, with regard to us at war. The reason for the Declaration of War on 4<sup>th</sup> August giving the violation of Belgian neutrality as its basis, was a Hoax, intended to mislead its own country and the neutral States as to the real reasons of the war. (Applause.) Now that the English-Belgian war plan has been unveiled in all its details, the policy of the English statesmen in this regard is branded before the tribunal of history for the rest of time. (Quite right!) English diplomacy has contradicted itself. In answer to its call, Japan has torn from us heroic Tsingtau, thereby violating Chinese neutrality (Assent). Has England taken any steps against this violation of neutrality? (Quite true.) Did it show the same sensitive conscience as to the upholding of the rights of neutral States? (Lively applause.)

Gentlemen, when I was called to this chair 5 years ago, the "Dreibund" was opposed by a firmly united Entente, England's work was designed to serve the known principle of the Balance of Power, which means in plain German that the principle followed for centuries by British policy and directed against the strongest Continental power, should find its strongest tool in the Triple Entente. Besides, it was from the beginning an aggressive alliance in contrast to the purely defensive tendency of the German Empire. However, a people as great and thorough as the German people, does not allow the free development of its strength to be tied up. In face of this combination German policy saw its way clearly. We had to try by explanations and agreements with the single powers of the "Triple Entente" to avert the danger of war. We had at the same time to increase our power of defence in such a measure that if war did come, we should be strong enough. (Lively applause.) You know Gentlemen, we see how necessary that was. In France we always met with the old idea of Revenge. Nurtured by ambitious politicians, it proved to be stronger than the wish, cherished without doubt, by parts of French population of having friendly relations with us. With Russia we did come to some single agreements, but the close bonds, which bound Russia to France, the contrast between Russia and our Ally Austro-Hungary, and a Pan-Slavic hatred of Germany, which was carefully tended by a party, who wanted power, excluded both in case of war.

*Comparatively speaking, England was the freest.*

I have already reminded you with what emphasis the English Statesmen repeatedly represented and boasted in Parliament of how free England was to act.

Here was the first and best opportunity to come to an understanding, which then—I think I am not saying too much—would have guaranteed the peace of the world. (Lively applause.) *I had to act according to this and I did so.* The way was narrow, I knew that quite well.

In face of the English way of thinking for decades, the English motto that the arbitrament of the world is due to England,—which could only be maintained by undisputed control of the seas on one hand, and on the other, by the much talked of "Balance of Power" on the Continent, and with the strength which a matter-of-fact dogma had imparted, I had never hoped, by any persuasion, to do away with this old English principle. What I considered possible was—that the increasing strength of Germany and the growing risk of a war would compel England to see that this principle, followed so long in English polities, had become antiquated and unpractical, and that England would then find some means for coming to an agreement with Germany.

But Gentlemen—the dogma had taken such deep roots that it paralized all attempts of coming to an understanding.

A new impediment arose on account of the *crisis in 1911*.

The English nation woke up one morning, to discover the fact that it had been on the brink of a European war. Forced by public opinion the English statesmen wanted to approach Germany. After long and great trouble, we succeeded in coming to an understanding regarding some matters of economical interest, relating in the first place to Africa and Asia minor, which were intended to diminish the political places of friction, if the free development of our strength were not impeded. The world is wide, and has space enough for both nations to develope alongside. (Cheers.) Not to be prevented and hemmed in, in this free development, (Cheers) has been the principle that our policy has always upheld. But, Gentlemen, while we were carrying on negotiations, England was incessantly preparing to strengthen her relations with France and Russia. The decisive factor was, that outside the political sphere, a *Military Convention* had been agreed upon, in the case eventually of a European war. England carried on these negotiations as secretly as possible. When anything regarding these trickled through to the public—it happened several times—then the English government did its utmost, to treat matters in Parliament as well as in the Press as being perfectly harmless.

These English conventions did not remain hidden from us. The whole situation could be summed up as follows:—England was willing to agree with us on certain points—the first and most important principle of English policy, however, remained: Germany was to be held in check as to the free development of its full strength by the “Balance of Power.” That was the line of demarcation of the friendly relations between England and Germany. For this end the Triple Entente did its utmost. When the friends demanded military assurances, the English statesmen were ready to give them at once. Thus the ring was closed, England in the train of France and Russia. If the chauvinistic clique in France and Russia, whose strongest support was founded on the English connivance wanted to start war, then England was morally bound to follow.

*Gentlemen—when I learned of the proposed maritime agreement between England and Russia at the beginning of July this year, I clearly let all this be understood, through our Ambassador, and pointed out the danger it would involve for a European war. Hardly a fortnight later it all came to pass just as I had predicted.*

We have drawn conclusions from this whole situation. In quick successions I have brought before you the greatest armament bills known in German history—while fully aware of the dangers which surround us, you have passed them and granted the “Vaterland” what was necessary for its defence. War now having broken out, England joined its allies—and loudly and openly proclaims she will fight till Germany is crushed, in an economical as well as military sense. Pan-Slavic arrogance calls forth exultant applause!

France hopes with all the strength of its old military tradition to wipe out the stain of 1870. Gentlemen, we have only one answer to give our enemies:—Germany will not let itself be crushed. (Loud applause.) As our military strength, so our financial strength has been proved and offered unconditionally for the nations welfare. Economic life is maintained. The unemployed are comparatively few. German organization strength and activity, is constantly looking for new ways of warding off approaching evils and remedying present ones. Neither men nor women shun voluntary work.

We have no need for recruiting drums! (Quite right) and if this spirit of the people, this moral greatness of a people the like of which is unknown in the history of the world (Applause), if the millions of sacrifices shown by a nation in arms—opposite a world of enemies, is reviled by our enemies as militarism, when they call us Huns and Barbarians, spreading a flood of lies about us all through the world—Gentlemen! we are proud enough not to let that sadden us. (Applause.)

This splendid spirit, which in unparalleled unity kindles in all German hearts, must and will conquer. (Lively applause.) If we have achieved a glorious and happy peace, then let us prize this, as the most sacred legacy of these serious and great times. (Applause.) As if by magic, the bars have fallen which in a latent time separated the members of the people, which were erected in misunderstanding, distrust and envy.

It is elevating and fortunate that once for all this thrash has been swept away, that the man is valued, one like another, stretching out their hands to each other for one—for a common cause. (Lively applause.) I must once more refer to the words spoken by the Kaiser at the outbreak of the war “I don’t know any parties, I only know Germans.” When the war is over, the parties will return, for without different parties and political struggles there can be no political life. But, Gentlemen we shall fight for this—and I for my part promise to do so—we shall fight that in this struggle there will only be Germans. This certainty we shall consider as a sacred inheritance of these great days. (Hear! Hear!) Gentlemen—I must close my short explanation. It is not a time for words and I cannot discuss all the points, which concern the nation and myself so deeply. But one word! Let us turn our thoughts for a moment with true and deep gratitude to Germany’s sons, on the battle-fields in the East and West, on the High Seas and the Shores of the Pacific Ocean, as well as in our Colonies, to those who have given their lives for their country. (The House rises.) In gratitude for their heroism, now dumb, let us unite in the vow to hold out till our last breath, so that our sons and grandsons can carry on our work for the good of the Empire in a still stronger Germany, unthreatened by foreign menace and power. (Applause.) May this vow ring out to our sons and brothers, who are still fighting against the enemy, to Germany’s hearts blood, which courses

through the veins of numberless and nameless heroes, to all those, for whom we are ready to give all we have, to our kinsmen in foreign countries, the retained, the threatened, the prisoners, and the badly treated. (Applause.)

We shall hold out, and I beg you to emphasise this, by passing this Bill—we shall hold out, till we are certain that nobody will disturb our peace—a peace in which we shall develope and tend German strength and German conditions as a free people! (Long, continuous, stormy applause, clapping and cheers.)

## The Bavarian Minister President, Graf von Hertling, on the Reichstag-Sitting 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1914.

The Bavarian Minister President who was in Berlin for the Reichstag-Sitting, has given the following account of his impressions to a representative of the "Kreuzzeitung":—

This sitting of the Reichstag has shown the foreign countries that are flooded with false reports, the true mood which exists in Germany. All the members have participated at it, and in the presence of Ministers of almost all Bundesstaaten, the unanimity was manifested, in which all princes and governments in the German Empire are united. I have now belonged to the Reichstag for almost 4 decades and know from eye-witnesses what a powerful impression the glowing enthusiasm which reigned in the Reichstag on 4<sup>th</sup> August has made—but so violent, so determined, so obstinate as on 2<sup>nd</sup> December, the Reichstag has never been before.

The applause, thrilling in its seriousness and strength, which the Chancellor's vigorous words called forth, were a proof that the German people is unanimously resolved, to hold out and that everyone is mistaken who thinks Germany would allow itself to be brought to a peace unworthy of the great and bloody sacrifices we have made.

There is no room in Germany now for pessimists and weaklings. Yesterday the Chancellor once more brought proofs which are absolutely incriminating for our enemies, that we did not wish this war. But now that it has been forced upon us, we must fight it out to the end of our strength. We can look to the future with quiet confidence. Our enemies have underrated the spirit of sacrifice, the unanimity and impetus of the German people; they cannot, however, now complain if they must suffer from the effects of their mistake.

This sitting of the Reichstag has had advantages in other directions. There are a great many people in the country who are under the impression, that our diplomats could have prevented the war or at least rendered the conditions more favourable under

which we are waging it. Now that we have heard the Chancellor's speech, no intelligent being can have any doubt that the development which has led to this war, has been uncontrollable, for our enemies have been brought together by an impulse, which has more influence on the lives of nations, than on those of human beings—Envy. Our economic growth in strength, our incomparable development in material matters as well as in culture, our increasing success in the markets of the world, these have been the factors, which have formed the coalition of enemies against us. No diplomacy in the world could have directed the effects of these instincts of envy and hatred into other tracks. It has been said that our diplomacy should have recognized the entwinements which threatened us. It should not only have recognized but appreciated accordingly the hostile feeling abroad towards us. It would be well for whoever talks in this way to read the Chancellor's speech carefully through once more. There can be no doubt about this fact—the Government has clearly seen the development of events beforehand; it has—at a time at which an advertance was still possible—not failed to give warning. The diplomacy which has erred—and very gravely erred—is on the other side; they are the diplomats, who believed that party differences would weaken Germany's military strength; the phantasts who believed in the possibility of discords among German princes, who in their incurable infatuation believed it would be possible to crush Germany.

But they have made a bad reckoning, as events up to this have proved. A fortunate ending of the war will with God's help prove it to the end of time,

## How England played with Belgium's Neutrality.

Fresh incriminating proofs have been discovered recently, showing the guilt of the Anglo-Belgian treaty. A short time ago, Mr. Grant-Watson, secretary of the British Legation in Brussels, was arrested. He had remained behind at the British Embassy after the latter had transferred its headquarters to Antwerp and later on to Havre. The above named gentleman was recently caught trying to destroy certain documents, which he had managed to take unobserved from the Legation at the time of his arrest. An examination of these documents showed, that they were lists containing most minute data, concerning the Belgian mobilization and defence of Antwerp, dated 1913—1914.

Among the papers were found circulars to the higher Belgian authorities, bearing the signatures of the Belgian Minister of War and Chief of the General Staff in facsimile, as well as the record of a meeting of the "Committee for creating a base for provisioning Antwerp," dated 27<sup>th</sup> May 1913.

The fact that these documents were found at the British Embassy, is sufficient proof that the Belgian government kept no secrets of a military nature from the English government, but that both were in the closest communication. Special interest must be attached to the following manuscript, which was found among the papers, and which the English secretary was most anxious to destroy. It is in French and we herewith give a copy:—

Renseignements.

- 1° Les officiers français ont reçu ordre de rejoindre dès le 27 après-midi :
- 2° Le même jour, le chef de Gare de Feignies a reçu ordre de concentrer vers Maubeuge tous les wagons fermés disponibles, en vue de transport de troupes.

Communiqué par la Brigade de gendarmerie de Frameries.

It must here be noted, that Feignies is a railway station in France, on the line Maubenge Mons, about 3 km from the Belgian frontier. Frameries is on the same line in Belgium, situated about 10 km from the French frontier. We see from this notice that France's first mobilization measures were taken on 27<sup>th</sup> July, and that the Belgian government communicated this fact to the English Legation at once. If any further proofs had been required to show the intimate connection existing between England and Belgium, this material is a valuable supplement. It is a further proof that Belgium had perforated her neutrality in favour of the "Entente" and had become an active member of the Coalition, which had been formed for the destruction of the German Empire. England, however, looked on Belgian neutrality in the light of "a scrap of paper" to which she referred when it suited her interests, and overlooked when it appeared advisable. It is obvious that the English government used the violation of Belgian neutrality by Germany as an excuse, to make the war against us appear justified in the eyes of the world, as well as the English people.

(*Nordd. Allg. Ztg., 14<sup>th</sup> December 1914.*)

## Further Documents relating to England's Violation of Neutrality.

Under this heading the "Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung" (Dec. 1<sup>st</sup> 1914) writes:—

"Recently our troops located and seized certain secret military text-books, compiled by the English War Department, bearing the title:—"Belgium road and river reports, prepared by the General staff war office." We have in our possession four volumes of this work, of which Vol. I was printed as early as 1912, Vol. II 1913, Vol. III

(in 2 parts), and Vol. IV in 1914. The text-books contain the most detailed description of the land areas from a military stand-point. In Vol. I for instance, beginning with page 130, there is a description of the great highway Nieuport-Dixmuide-Ypres-Menin-Tourcoing-Tournay, based on physical condition, grades, tactical considerations, such as observation points and water ways, the whole illustrated with maps. As an example, we quote literally the tactical observation concerning Dixmuide, found on page 151:—

“Dixmuide would be difficult to take, if attacked from North or South. The best positions for defence from the South, are West of the highway, as far as the railroad and East of the highway, as far as the small hills. To the West of the highway the firing range is clear for 1,500 yards. East of this, the outlook is hindered on account of the growth of some trees. Two battalions would be sufficient for the defence. The enemy would probably place his artillery in the vicinity of Hoogmolen and Veartkani. Otherwise there is nothing to be mentioned here of tactical importance, or anything that would impede the marching of the troops.

As points of observation, the mills at Reencheek with unbroken view and the Koeberg,  $7\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Ypres with a view East and South.”

In addition to this, the church towers are mentioned as excellent observation posts. In an equally detailed manner the whole area drained by the river Schelde and its tributaries, is described, with exact mention of all villages, landing places, ferries, as well as all data concerning the width and depth of the streams details as to bridges, enumeration of boats, etc. etc.

Compiled as they are, these volumes furnish a complete military guide for the staff officers, as well as for commanders of any other rank. The following subjects are also included:—

1. A list of districts and villages, giving their available capacity for the billeting of troops. The extent and nature of transport facilities, and all other information that an officer in charge of a local division might require.

2. Plans to guide aviators in Belgium, South of the line Charleroi-Namur-Liege as well as for the section surrounding Brussels.

This very carefully compiled military guide book, in which all subjects are dealt with in detail, is supplemented with maps of all harbours and landing places, is stamped “Confidential” and dated 1914. The material furnished for these books, has been worked up and collected since 1909.

It is thus shown that for the past 5 years the most minute and comprehensive plans were being taken for a military campaign in neutral Belgium. These books are simply secret regulations for an English army operating in Belgium. Without the assistance in the widest sense of the word, on the part of the Belgian civil and

military authorities such a work could never have been accomplished. Such minute reports of a tactical and strategic nature, and such exact data regarding the entire Belgian railway and traffic system, as well as references to rolling stock, locks and bridges, would be otherwise hardly obtainable. Especially the information concerning the capacity of various settlements and their distribution, as if it were in their own land, could only emanate from the Belgian government. Here, there can be no doubt that Belgian official records were used. While peace was still prevailing, England and Belgium had agreed to co-operate on military lines, that from a political as well as a military point of view, Belgium could be looked upon only in the light of being England's vassal.

England's indignation, which it has advertised loudly to the whole world on account of Germany's so-called "Breach of Neutrality" is as empty as untenable, when faced with those incriminating documents. If any one has a reason to be indignant, it is we. When, as a consequence of our operations near the coast, the English and French press maintained, we were ignorant of the dangers of floods in the so-called "Polder District," in so far they were right, as that we only knew as much of Belgium's land areas, as was possible from books, which could be bought at any book-sellers. The English guide books, with their excellent maps were all the more valuable for us. In this way we were able to make use of this excellent and useful material and fight England with its own weapons. It is the best recognition and tribute we can pay the careful work of our adversaries.

## Germany and the South African Union.

The Imperial German Government, has been requested by the Boers, to give an explanation as to Germany's attitude towards the South African Union during the present war. The Imperial Colonial Secretary, Doctor Solf, sent the following reply:—

"So as to excuse the uncalled for and aggressive attack of English troops, in the Protectorate of German South West Africa, as well as to palliate such a step in the eyes of the Dutch population of South Africa, the majority of which were strongly opposed to such measures, some members of the Ministry and Parliament have publicly as well as privately announced, that the German Government is taking secret measures to annex South Africa and turn it into a German colony. The German troops in German South West Africa had violated territory belonging to the Union, before hostilities had been opened by the South African Government. Germany had, therefore, provoked the attack. Had counter measures not been taken, the Protectorate of German South West Africa would have become the base of military operations against the British ships,

communicating between South Africa and Europe, the Union thereby incurring immeasurable harm."

As the German Government wishes to dispel the impression, which these false reports have made on South Africa, I now declare the following:—

"The German Government has never had the intention or desire of occupying the territory of the South African Union, either temporarily or permanently, nor enforcing German law on the Union or parts of the country, neither by military attacks from German South West Africa, nor in any other way.

As far as the Imperial Government is aware, the territory of the Union was neither attacked by land or water, prior to the South African Government's measures for attacking German South West Africa.

Germany is convinced that the causes of the war between England and Germany have nothing whatever to do with South Africa; Germany would be willing to suspend the hostilities, which the South African Union has forced on her, provided that the Government of the Union should see its way to desist from further hostilities against German territory and to evacuate the portion already occupied. The German Government would in this case be ready to give the assurance that no hostilities against the South African Union from German South West Afrika would be entered upon.

Should the South Africans succeed in erecting an independent State, the German Government would be ready and willing to recognize it, and respect its political independence and territorial integrity.

## How German Missionaries and Nuns were treated by the English in the Colonies.

A few days ago, three missionary priests of the "Pallotiner" and three sisters of the same order, who were made prisoners on 27<sup>th</sup> September, when the English and French took possession of Duala, the capital of Cameroon, arrived at the mother-houses. The priests' very poor outfit shows the great hurry, in which they were dragged away. With about 750 other male prisoners, they had wretched accommodation in the package-room of an English cargo steamer—the lady prisoners, numbering about 30, were crowded into a couple of cabins, and after a journey of 8 weeks, during which they had to undergo severe privations, were brought to England. Owing to the American consul's energetic intervention, the paters, nuns, and other ladies were allowed to return to their homes. On their journey through Holland, they met with the most friendly receptions. The remaining paters and brothers of the missionary station

of the order of "Pallotins" in Duala, have been taken away as prisoners of war, on a French steamer and nothing definite is known as to their fate. The buildings of the missionary station itself, including the residence of the Right Reverend Bishop, who at the time was on a confirmation tour in Cameroon, were entirely occupied by the French. The horses were stabled in the episcopal cathedral, when the benches had been removed. The enormous amount of damage done to the "Pallotiner Mission" cannot yet be estimated.

*(Germania Nr. 563, 8<sup>th</sup> December, 1914.)*

## German Comments on the French Yellow Book.

The "Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung" of 21<sup>st</sup> December writes the following with regard to the French "Yellow Book."

"In the French Yellow Book, as well as in all the other official publications of the "Triple Entente" the thought is interwoven like a red thread, that Germany could have prevented the war if it had brought its influence to bear on Austro-Hungary, so that latter should moderate its demands regarding Servia. The Entente Powers take the one-sided point of view, that Russia had the right to pose as Servia's Protector and could demand Germany's recognition and consideration in this respect. On the other hand, the members of the Entente contest Austro-Hungary's rights of taking the necessary measures against a smaller neighbour's challenges, which had been going on for years and tended to endanger its safety and position as a great power. According to Russia and her friends, Germany should have held up Austro-Hungary and abided by the decision and position taken by Russia, that the Powers were to decide how far Austro-Hungary should be allowed to demand satisfaction in the Servian question. In other words, in the diplomatic duel between the Triple Entente on the one hand, and Austro-Hungary and Germany on the other, the latter were to quietly accept whatever defeats and humiliations the Triple Entente had arranged for them. As they could not agree to this, and Germany in accordance with its treaty took its place at the side of Austro-Hungary—the war has broken out.

The fact repeatedly referred to, that Germany continually refused to lend its hand to the arrangement of a peaceful outcome is a direct lie, which even in the Yellow Book itself is contradicted in different places. Germany demurred against the English proposition of arranging the question by a conference of the four Powers, or a discussion of four, only because any interference of the Powers in this question, which according to German opinion solely concerned Austro-Hungary and Servia, was contradictory to the principle and point of view taken by Germany, from the beginning of the crisis, and because the German government was distinctly of opinion that

direct negotiations presented more successful views, and in case an arrangement were at all possible, would lead to a more speedy end. In spite of these doubts, for which there were just and sufficient grounds, the Berlin Cabinet, as can be seen from the Yellow Book, showed great readiness at every opportunity to lend its hand to a peaceful solution of the question.

The reproaches made against Germany, that it refrained from advising Austro-Hungary to moderation are as unjust as they are unfounded. Germany took all possible steps in Vienna, compatible with the dignity of its ally, and only refused to bring the pressure to bear on Austro-Hungary, which Russia and her friends demanded. Acting on Germany's advice, the Austro-Hungarian government at once declared that it would recognize Servia's territorial integrity. It was through Germany that the interrupted negotiations between Vienna and Petersburg were re-opened. This fact is however wisely concealed by all publications of the Entente Cabinets.

The action of the Ambassador, Freiherrn von Schoen in Paris, as represented by the Yellow Book, is typical of the one-sided point of view of the Triple Entente. The Ambassador was instructed to urge co-operation, in the most friendly manner with the French government with a view to peace, and expressed the request that the French Cabinet would advise moderation in Petersburg. Any one who is unprejudiced must admit, that we have here an irrefutable proof of the conciliatory spirit of the German government, as well as its honest wish to ensure peace. This proposition of Herrn von Schoen is looked upon by the French statesmen as a clumsy attempt of Germany to sow distrust between Russia and France. To this we must remark, the Entente Powers not only demand from Germany that it should give its ally good advice—it is even to bring pressure to bear on it. They make bitter reproaches to Germany on account of its not meeting these demands. *But when Germany requests France to advise her ally to moderation, then this is considered an attempt at perfidious instigation!* How do the friendly overtures of the German Ambassador with the French government, so misinterpreted by the French themselves, compare with the later statement made by M. Viviani that Germany absolutely wished for war, and that against France.

The documents published in the French Yellow Book, emphasize the admirable conciliatory and peaceful spirit, which the Russian government is supposed to have shown from the beginning of the crisis. In opposition to this, we must recall the fact that Herr Sasonoff in the course of his first conversation with the English and French Ambassadors remarked, Russia would be obliged to mobilize. (Compare English Blue Book No. 6.) According to this, we see clearly Russia's intention of bringing military pressure to bear on the negotiations with Austro-Hungary. It is well known that the Russian mobilisation was decreed on 25<sup>th</sup> July and according

to the testimony of reliable witnesses it was in force from that date throughout the entire Russian empire.

The reports of the English Ambassador in Petersburg, who by the way seems to have acted independently without any instructions from his government on this point, prove that the beginning of military activity in Russia was a source of great anxiety to him, and he repeatedly warned the Russian Foreign Minister against premature mobilisation.

It is remarkable how the official publications of the Yellow Book try to get round this very important point. It must be proved at all costs, that Germany was the first to take military precautions, but the Yellow Book can only enumerate as "proofs" that according to the report of the French Consul in Frankfort on 29<sup>th</sup> July, troops have arrived there in the streets from Darmstadt, Cassel and Mainz, and according to the report of the French Ambassador in Munich bearing the same date, the mills in Illkirch have been requested to reserve their stores for the army. Besides, the transport of flying machines from Straßburg, and the recalling of Bavarian non-com. infantry officers is reported. More indigent proofs are hardly conceivable.

The French Ambassador in Petersburg when reporting Russia's mobilisation against Germany, finds himself compelled, in the absence of other proofs to take refuge in phantasy and maintain that the entire Russian mobilisation is only a consequence of the entire Austro-Hungarian mobilisation, and the military measures taken by Germany. It is not an easy matter to misrepresent facts in so few words, as in this telegram of M. Paléologue's dated 31<sup>st</sup> July and reproduced in No. 118 of the Yellow Book. Even the Russian government did not dare to justify its mobilisation measures in this way. It is generally known that until 31<sup>st</sup> July, Germany limited herself to taking necessary precautions, which were a consequence of the extensive military measures taken by her neighbours. It was only on 31<sup>st</sup> July, when the entire Russian mobilisation had been officially proclaimed, that Germany took measures for a threatening state of war, and on the evening of 1<sup>st</sup> August mobilisation was ordered.

The French Yellow book tries to bring another proof. The well-known report of the English Ambassador in Vienna compiled four weeks after the outbreak of war, has been fruitlessly trying to show that Austro-Hungary and Russia were on the point of coming to an agreement regarding the Servian Note, when Germany destroyed all hopes of a peaceful issue by its declaration of war. This report has been refuted in a concise manner in the "Wiener Fremdenblatt" of 25<sup>th</sup> September. As this fairy tale has been repeated, we must call attention to the fact that Russia, at the moment when Germany had succeeded in bringing about a re-opening of direct negotiations between Austro-Hungary and Russia, in the night of 30<sup>th</sup>—31<sup>st</sup> July, unmindful of the solemn promises, given

by the Russian Minister of War and Chief of the General Staff to the German Military Attaché, that the troops on the German frontier were not to be mobilized—in spite of these promises, a general mobilisation was ordered—against Germany too, and in this way Germany's attempts at mediation were nullified. We see from this, that in spite of all the juggling of the Triple Entente the fact cannot be put aside that Russia is guilty of having started the European War. Furthermore, we must refer to some points in the French Yellow Book, from which we can deduct what amount of value can be placed upon the diplomatic documents published therein.

1. In Ambassador Jules Cambon's report, dated 6<sup>th</sup> May 1913, some expressions, supposed to have been made by Generaloberst von Moltke, are given, the trend of which is, that pricks of conscience regarding an attack must be put aside, should war appear necessary. Generaloberst v. Moltke never made use of such an expression. All that M. Cambon has reported on this point, has been invented by his voucher.

2. Cambon's report of 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1913 is in the same strain. In this, a conversation is reported, which is said to have taken place between His Majesty the Kaiser, the King of the Belgians, and Generaloberst v. Moltke. In the course of this conversation it is reported that Generaloberst v. Moltke laid stress on the necessity and in inevitability of a war with France, and from what His Majesty the Kaiser said, conclusions could be drawn that in 1913 he had given up his former peaceful point of view. The result of inquiries made in this respect, show that instead of a conversation at which Three were present, only a private one, between the King of the Belgians and Generaloberst v. Moltke took place. In the course of this conversation Herr v. Moltke merely expressed his opinion, that in case of a collision with the French, the German army would prove itself superior in training, as well as morally. The words reported by M. Cambon, as having been expressed by him—that he considered war necessary and inevitable and this time we must make an end (*cette fois, il faut en finir*) are denied most emphatically by Generaloberst v. Moltke.

There is just as little truth in the report that Herr v. Jagow in his conversation with M. Cambon on 30<sup>th</sup> July (Yellow Book No. 109), in which he pointed out the danger involved by the Russian mobilisation, is supposed to have said, that the leaders of the army in Germany were pressing for mobilisation.

3. The most unfounded reproaches have been made against the German Ambassador v. Tschirschky in Vienna, who not long ago was brutally attacked in the Russian Press by his colleague Schebeko. He is accused of having wanted "a powerful solvence although he let it be seen that the Foreign Office was not of the same opinion as himself." The Yellow Book does not even make an attempt to prove the truth of the accusations brought against Herrn v. Tschirschky.

4. The report of the French Chargé d'Affaires in Munich, in which it is stated that the Königlich Bayrische Government was aware of the Austro-Hungarian Note as early as 23<sup>rd</sup> July, has been shown to be an invention by the official Dementi of the Königlich Bayrische Government.

5. In the French Yellow Book it is stated in two places that Herr von Schoen handed over the German Note of 23<sup>rd</sup> July (compare White Book, Anlage 1b) in Paris on 24<sup>th</sup> July, while the presentation of the Note in London did not take place until the following day. This statement is made so as to prove that Germany wished to threaten France from the beginning. We see here a disfigurement of facts, as well as a change of dates. A glance at the German White Book will show that the German Note of 23<sup>rd</sup> July here referred to, was sent to Paris, London, and St. Petersburg simultaneously. In the English Blue Book the remark is added to the German Note No. 9 "Note communicated by German Ambassador 24<sup>th</sup> July 1914."

6. The statement made by M. Viviani in his communication to M. Paul Cambon, dated 1<sup>st</sup> August (No. 127) that Austro-Hungary was the first to take mobilisation measures, is such a risky speculation on the credulance of uninformed readers, that it has hardly a precedent in any official document. Austro-Hungary only took measures for a general mobilisation on 31<sup>st</sup> July (vide Yellow Book No. 115). Russia had ordered general mobilisation on the night of 30<sup>th</sup>—31<sup>st</sup> July, but had taken measures against Austro-Hungary as early as 29<sup>th</sup> Juli. The deception is made still more perfect by the fact, that the report No. 115 regarding the Austro-Hungarian mobilisation in the Yellow Book is intentionally placed before the report No. 118 regarding the Russian mobilisation.

7. The French Ambassador Paléologue states in his report of 30<sup>th</sup> July No. 103, how Herr Sasonoff told the German Ambassador, in order to prove the conciliatory and peaceful intentions of the Czar, that he wished in the name of His Majesty to make a new proposal. The facts of the case in reality were following:

When Herr Sasonoff termed the statement of Austro-Hungary, that it would not infringe Servian territorial integrity as being insufficient, Graf Pourtalès requested him not to cut off the threads of the negotiations, so as to establish the exact limit of the demands Russia made on Austro-Hungary. Graf Pourtalès advocated that a compromise could be arranged, if some concessions were made. Herr Sasonoff at once and in presence of the Ambassador drew up a formula, which in all its essentials maintained the former Russian demands. When Graf Pourtalès distinctly emphasized that he considered an acceptance of these demands by Austro-Hungary improbable, he nevertheless expressed his willingness to hand over the formula to his Government. The statement made in the French Yellow Book, that he had promised to support the formula with

his Government, is not correct. It is an interesting fact, as can be seen from the Yellow Book (*vide* No. 113), that the English Government succeeded by means of its Ambassador in inducing Herrn Sasonoff to change the formula later on, making it still more impossible for Austro-Hungary to accept. He was obliged to bring in the condition, which he had not done up to this, that Austria should discontinue the march of its troops on Servian territory. The fact shows that the British Government, which in the meantime had become more Russian than the Czar himself, wanted at all costs to prevent a compromise being arranged.

8. The measures taken for the French mobilisation are justified in the Yellow Book in the following manner:

M. Viviani maintained (Yellow Book 127) that already long before the Russian mobilisation "on last Wednesday" Herr von Schoen announced the impending proclamation of a "dangerous state of war." These measures were taken by Germany and under cover of this Germany at once began to mobilize.

Here once again the Yellow Book has not kept strictly to facts. Germany having received word from her Ambassador in Bern on 29<sup>th</sup> July that 80,000 men French reserves had been pushed forward to the eastern French frontier, Herr von Schoen got instructions to inform the French government that Germany would be obliged to take protective measures and to proclaim "Danger of War" if France continued in these warlike preparations. This did not mean mobilisation nor the calling in of reserves, but would increase the tension which we did not at all desire, as we had not given up hope that amicable arrangements could be concluded.

These few quotations are sufficient to show the spirit which pervades the French Yellow Book. From the material produced, it can be clearly seen on what weak supports the proofs rest, that are brought forward by the French Government to show that it was Germany that caused the world conflagration.

## Falsifications contained in the English Blue Book.

In the periodical "Die Eiche" which publishes a German translation of the English Blue Book, the falsifications contained in same are fully discussed and incontrovertibly proved in face of documents in hand. We take the following facts from the preface, which introduces the reproduction of the documents:—

"During the process of translation our intention to serve the truth has, however, experienced an unforeseen transformation. When working on the Blue Book, we more than once met with inconsequence, i. e. not only contradictions in face of the wellknown course of events, but in consequences, contained in the Blue Book itself. It can be proved from the text of the Blue Book, that

several very important documents, which were interchanged between 20<sup>th</sup> July and 4<sup>th</sup> August, have been left out. By comparing the given data it can be further proved, that certain documents could not have been dispatched nor answered at the time stated. It can also be proved, that intentional changes have been made in the reproduction of a specially important document at the preliminary stages of the war. The last and most convincing proof is, that at least one of the documents has not been sent in the manner in which it is therein stated.

It is not our intention to undertake an exact examination of the Blue Book, nor show up these cases of inconsequence one by one, but it is our duty to repudiate such a heinous accusation as has been brought against us here, at least in one point—if possible the most important one, by bringing our proofs to face the accusation. There can be no doubt whatever, as to the significance of our discovery: “The correspondence of the British Government which by command of His Majesty was submitted to both Houses of Parliament by Sir Edward Grey, contains forgeries.” We refer to the publication of the English Government, which wanted to convince the people of the necessity for England’s Declaration of War, and England’s rights,—and in fact did influence the opinion of the nation as well as that of foreign countries. We see clearly from the printed text itself, without any reference to opposing representations or reports, with no knowledge of the material used for the English publication: that the composition of the Blue Book has been compiled with the assistance of Untruth.”

No. 105 of the Blue Book contains a letter from Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie, dated 30<sup>th</sup> July:—

“The German army had its outposts at our frontiers yesterday (Friday). German patrols had pushed forward twice to our territory. Our outposts have been withdrawn to a distance of 10 km. from the frontier. The population is indignantly protesting at being exposed to the attacks of the hostile army in such a manner, but the Government wished to show both public opinion and the British Government *that in no case does France wish to be looked upon as the originator of the attack.* The whole XVI. Army Corps from Metz, reinforced by part of the VIII. from Trier and Cöln, is occupying the frontier as far as Metz on the Luxemburg side. The XV. Army Corps in Strassburg is at the frontier in closed ranks. The inhabitants of Elsass-Lothringen have been forbidden to cross the frontier and threatened to be shot in case of non-compliance. Germany has called in ten thousand reserves.

This is the last state of mobilisation, while we have not called in a single reserve.

As you see, Germany has done so. I should like to add, that from all I have heard it goes to prove that the German preparations were begun on the Saturday on which the Austrian Note was presented.

These facts, added to that contained in my telegram of yesterday, will put you in a position of proving to the British Government the hostile intentions of the one and the aggressive preparations of the other.

Paris, 31<sup>st</sup> July 1914."

This document is one of three enclosures sent with Sir Edward Grey's letter to Bertie. It is a detailed account of the French Foreign Minister's report to M. Cambon, according to which the German army was preparing for an attack. If this report contained the truth, the English Government was obliged to go to war in consequence of previous promises given by Sir Edward Grey. Here we have one of the most important documents that had passed between the Powers.

This document cannot have been sent like this.

The translator of the Blue Book ascertains during the process of translation that above mentioned document of the French Minister's was dated "Paris, 31<sup>st</sup> July 1914," while Sir Edward Grey's letter, in which it was supposed to have been enclosed, was dated "30<sup>th</sup> July." *How is it possible for a document coming from London on 30<sup>th</sup> July to have an enclosure from Paris dated 31<sup>st</sup> July?!* The translator grew suspicious, although only using a copy of the Blue Book for the translation. But on our comparing the original, we saw clearly that in it the enclosure was dated: "Paris 31<sup>st</sup> July"—as well as being sent to Paris on 30<sup>th</sup> July. But a still greater surprise was in store on examination of later editions of the Blue Book:—The "Hysteron Proteron" had in the meantime seemed improbable to Sir Edward Grey; in consequence of this—in the second edition of the Blue Book, which otherwise had exactly the same form and contents as the first edition, he omitted the dates "Paris le 31 juillet, 1914" and "Paris 31<sup>st</sup> July 1914."

But perhaps there is a question here of a mistake in the dating?

Providence does Its work thoroughly when It wishes to bring the truth to light: The document has still further traces showing its origin. In the first sentence of the original edition we read:—"The German army had its outposts at our frontier yesterday Friday". Yesterday Friday? The only Friday that can be meant is 31<sup>st</sup> July. "Yesterday Friday" means therefore that the document was compiled on August 1<sup>st</sup>.

We see here a contradiction of the date given below, "31<sup>st</sup> July." Still more impossible!—A Paris document of August 1<sup>st</sup> enclosed in a London letter of 30<sup>th</sup> July! But here again Sir Edward Grey notices the inefficient work—and crosses out in a later edition of the Blue Book, which we have before us, the "vendredi" in the French text as well as the "Friday" in the English one. Nobody has remarked the deceit yet; all proofs must be destroyed. As quickly as possible, so quickly in fact, that in this later edition of

the Blue Book not only Friday, but the full stop at the end of the sentence, as well as the semicolon in the French text, is crossed out in the correction and—so that everything will be quite clear—a sentence is given without any sense. But the hasty work in the first weeks of the war caused a third fault to be overlooked through which the document is betrayed. For this third—Mistake—the first edition of the Blue Book brings a correction. In the document the French Minister maintains, his information showed “that the German preparations began on Saturday, exactly on the day on which the Austrian Ultimatum was presented.” The Minister therefore states, it is significant that the German preparations began simultaneously with the presentation of the Austrian Note, from which we see that it was all a pre-arranged matter. The Minister is supposed to have had exact information that on this Saturday, on which the Ultimatum was presented, commands were given throughout the country. It is a great pity, but the Austrian Note was presented on a Thursday. The information stated here is an obvious invention, as it makes a mistake in the day, which is the most important point.

Sir Edward Grey notices this third mistake! This time he cannot cross it out, because the “Mistake” has remained in all editions of the Blue Book. This time he can only add an explanatory foot-note! To the “Saturday” is added: “Thus in original. The actual date of the presentation of the Austrian Note was in reality Thursday, 23<sup>rd</sup> July. The Servian answer was dated “Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> July” and it is clear that reference is here made to latter document”.—This explanation is more unfortunate than the mistake itself; in the first place it would not have been anything new if the French Minister communicated that preparation for war had taken place in consequence of the Servian reply; secondly the foot-note proved, that the document had no actual information, but that vague statements are maintained. This too is noted by Sir Edward: The foot-note betrays itself. As a consequence he omits it in the English Government’s German translation for the German prisoners and the neutrals, which we have just received. The attention of the Germans might otherwise be directed to the whole!

From the great interest which the English Government has shown regarding the false statements in the documents, caused by omissions and additions, we could almost believe that the forgery originated from it. We have other reasons of a linguistic character, showing that the English text existed before the French one.

Furthermore, Sir F. Bertie’s telegram of 30<sup>th</sup> July (Blue Book No. 99) as well as that of 31<sup>st</sup> July (Blue Book No. 117) prove that in Paris, the reports as to the German warlike preparations—as reported in the false documents—did not exist.

Why had Sir Edward Grey to send the report, which had been sent by the French Government to London, to his Ambassador in Paris? If it had really originated in Paris, Sir F. Bertie ought to have been aware of it sooner than Sir Edward Grey. Finally we

have noted something else, which, however, is not contained in the Blue Book, and for that reason will not be mentioned here, but which goes to strengthen our proof that the forgery originated in London, although it is not decided how much of the guilt can be attributed to Sir Edward Grey and how much to M. Paul Cambon. But this whole question is a difference of opinion, which can be attributed to both at the same time branding them.

*Result:* "The correspondence of the British Government, which by command of His Majesty was presented to both Houses of Parliament by Sir Edward Grey, contains serious forgeries. These falsifications are probably to be attributed to London and not Paris. It is certain that they have been remarked by the British Government and were covered up as far as possible. Sir Edward Grey is requested to give an explanation."

(*Nordd. Allg. Ztg. No. 321, 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1914.*)

## The Reichskanzler's Circular.

### *The Responsibility of the Triple Entente for the War.*

According to the Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung the Reichskanzler has sent the following circular to all the Imperial Ambassadors and Ministers:—

Main-Headquarters, 24<sup>th</sup> December.

"In the speech, which M. Viviani held in the French Chamber, we find the paragraph that France and Russia had agreed to the English proposal, on 31<sup>st</sup> July, of suspending military preparations, and entering into negotiations in London, and that if Germany had also agreed to this proposition, peace could have been secured even at the last moment.

As I cannot contradict this false maintenance, which has been uttered in the French Chamber, from the Dais of the German Reichstag, I nevertheless see myself compelled to submit following facts to your Excellencies . . . . with the request that all possible use may be made of them. The British "Conference Proposition" which we find in the English Blue Book No. 36, is from 26<sup>th</sup> July. Its aim was that representatives of Germany, France and Italy should meet in London with Sir Edward Grey, so as to find some way out of the difficulties which had arisen in the Servian question. From the beginning German's point of view was, that the Servian-Austrian conflict was a matter which only concerned these two mentioned states. This point of view was also recognized later on, by Sir Edward Grey himself. Germany had to refuse participation in the conference, because it could not allow Austro-Hungary to be subordinated to a tribunal of the Powers, in a question regarding its national vitality, which solely concerned Austro-Hungary. We

see clearly from the German White Book, that Austro-Hungary designated the proposal as being impossible to accept. By declaring war on Servia it showed its determination to settle the Servian question alone, without any interference of the Powers. It at the same time declared, so as to satisfy Russia's claims that it would respect Servian territory and integrity. As Russia was not satisfied with this assurance, the Servian question became a European one, which began with the tension between Austro-Hungary and Russia. So as to prevent this tension developing into a European conflagration, new ground had to be found, on which the mediation efforts of the Powers could be entered into.

It was to Germany we owe thanks as having been the first to enter on this ground. The Secretary of State, Herr von Jagow, in his conversation with the British Ambassador on 27<sup>th</sup> July pointed out, that he thought, Russia's desire of entering into direct negotiations with Austro-Hungary would improve the situations and presented hopes that the question could be settled amicably. This plan through which the idea of the English conference was temporarily abandoned, according to Russian opinion too, got every support from Germany from the first day on which it was expressed and was warmly advocated by her in Vienna. No Power could have tried more honestly and energetically to ensure the peace of the world than Germany.

England herself now gave up the idea of holding the conference and on her side supported the idea of direct negotiations between Vienna and St. Petersburg (Vide Blue Book 67). These efforts, however, met with difficulties, and they were difficulties, which were not presented by Germany nor Austro-Hungary, but by the Powers of the Triple Entente. Were Germany's efforts to succeed, they required the good will of the Powers not immediately interested, as well as the inactivity of those principally concerned, for if one of the two Powers between whom negotiations were pending, disturbed these negotiations by taking military measures, it could be seen from the beginning that this action could never achieve its end.

How was it now with the good will of the Powers?

How France behaved can be clearly seen from the French Yellow Book. She did not trust the German assurances. All steps taken by the German Ambassador, Freiherrn von Schoen, met with distrust and the desire he expressed that France should use her influence to urge moderation in Petersburg, was disregarded, as it was thought that the steps taken by Herrn von Schoen were meant "à compromettre la France au regard de la Russie." It can be seen from the French Yellow Book that *France did not take one single, positive step in the interests of peace.* What was the attitude taken by England? As long as the diplomatic negotiations were going on, she appeared as if trying to conciliate until the last, but her exterior actions were meant to humiliate the two Dreibund Powers. England was the first great power, which gave

orders for extensive military measures being taken, whereby she created an opinion, especially in Russia and France, which was most dangerous for the conciliatory actions. The report of the French Chargé d'Affaires in London of 27<sup>th</sup> July (Yellow Book No. 66) shows that already on 24<sup>th</sup> July the commander of the English fleet had taken discreet measures for the fleet to assemble at Portland. From this we see that Great Britain had taken mobilisation measures even before Servia. Furthermore, Great Britain also refused, like France, to exert her influence in Petersburg for moderation and restraint. Sir Edward Grey did not act on the reports of the English Ambassador in Petersburg, from which it was clearly to be seen that an imperative to Russia to stop mobilisation, would have been sufficient to save the situation, but just let matters take their course. At the same time, however, he deemed it advisable to point out to Germany and Austro-Hungary, although not very emphatically, still clearly enough, that England might participate in a European war. At the same time then, at which England, its conference idea now being given up, appeared to wish that Austro-Hungary should make compromises through Germany's mediation. Sir Edward Grey draws the attention of the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador in London, to the mobilisation measures taken by the English Fleet (Blue Book 48), and gives the German Ambassador to understand that England would probably be drawn into a war. He at once acquainted the Ambassadors of Russia and France of this warning sent to the German address. The victory of the war party in Petersburg was thereby firmly established.

This was exactly the course which, according to the opinion of the English Ambassador in Petersburg Buchanan, was most unsuitable for dispelling the tension that existed between the powers.

In consideration of all these difficulties it can be looked upon as a great success, that Germany succeeded in persuading Austro-Hungary to meet Russia's wish and enter into direct negotiations with latter State. Had Russia, without taking military precautions, continued the negotiations with Austro-Hungary, which latter power had only mobilized against Servia—then there would have been good prospects for the preservation of the peace of the world.

Instead of this, Russia mobilized against Austro-Hungary, although Sasanow knew perfectly well that this would put an end to all direct negotiations with Austro-Hungary. (Vide Blue Book 78.) The laborious result of the German conciliatory mediation efforts was thus destroyed with one blow.

But what did the Entente Powers do, so as to preserve peace at the last hour?

Sir Edward Grey again took up his conference proposal. According to the opinion of Herr Sasanow, the proper moment had now come to advocate the old English idea of a "Conversation of Four" to Austro-Hungary under pressure of the Russian mobilisation. (German White Book, page 7.) Graf Pourtalès explained

clearly to the Minister that in his opinion the Entente Powers demanded here from Austro-Hungary that which they did not allow to be demanded from Servia. In other words, to yield under pressure of military force. Under such conditions it was impossible for the conference to be looked upon in an agreeable light by Germany and Austro-Hungary. In spite of this, Germany declared in London that she would accept the proposal of an intervention of the Four Powers in principal, but the form of a conference was repugnant to her. At the same time the German Ambassador in Petersburg urged Sasanow to make some concessions on his side, so that a compromise could be arranged. It is a well known fact that these efforts remained fruitless.

Russia itself did not appear to lay any value on the further mediatory activity of Germany in Vienna, which was carried on to the last. In the night from 30<sup>th</sup>—31<sup>st</sup> July it ordered the mobilisation of its entire military forces, which was bound to have Germany's mobilisation and declaration of war as a consequence.

**In face of this course of events it is impossible to understand how a responsible statesman has the courage to maintain that Germany, who found herself surrounded by the Russian mobilisation, the military measures taken by France, and the mobilisation of the English Fleet, could have saved the situation in favour of peace, by accepting a conference on 31<sup>st</sup> July, held under the auspices of the Entente Powers supported by military force. It was not Germany, who worked for peace up to the last moment in Vienna, who frustrated the idea of an intervention of the Four Powers, but the military measures taken by the Entente Powers, who—though with words they advocated peace—were really resolved on war.**

von Bethmann Hollweg.



# W a r J o u r n a l

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## 1<sup>st</sup> December.

A German victory on the Vistula, 9,500 prisoners, 18 guns, and 26 machine guns captured.

The Somali rise against the English.

Portugal proclaims herself ready to join in the war.

The Servian resistance on the Kalubra completely broken.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> December.

The Kaiser meets the Arch-dukes Friedrich and Carl Franz Joseph in Breslau.

A Russian attack driven back at Przemysl.

A position captured in the Argonne.

Russian attacks in South Poland driven back.

Belgrade taken, 150 field guns captured.

French defeats in Morocco.

War sitting of the Reichstag. The Chancellor's speech. Unanimous acceptance of the new war loan, amounting to 5 milliards.

Ardanutsch in the Caucasus occupied by the Turks.

The freedom of the constitution in England limited.

Afghanistan ready for the Holy War.

## 3<sup>rd</sup> December.

Germans unjustly condemned to death in Morocco.

Tsingtau becomes a Japanese war harbour.

Dewet captured.

The English steamer "Earl of Aberdeen" sunk, off Hull by a German submarine.

## 4<sup>th</sup> December.

Minister president Salandra proclaims the "strongly armed" Italian neutrality, which is ready to meet any possibility.

General Rennenkampf removed from office.

England's losses on the continent up to this, are estimated in London at 84,000 men.

In Casablanca, 2 Germans condemned to death as spies.

The Kaiser arrives in Berlin for a short stay.

Attacks of the enemy in the West, on the Sundgau and in East Prussia repulsed, the enemy suffering huge losses.

### 5<sup>th</sup> December.

Fürst Bülow appointed to be ambassador in Rome.

Measures are taken against sedition in Ireland.

The modern Australian battle ship "Australia" missed with 1,000 men on board.

### 6<sup>th</sup> December.

The Russians collect the greater part of their Northern army and try to break through at Lodz. but are defeated and forced to retreat with heavy losses. Lodz occupied by the Germans. 5,000 prisoners and 16 cannons taken.

The Russians lose 1,200 prisoners on the East Prussian frontier.

Fighting in West Galicia more violent.

6 Russian Generals besides Rennenkampf removed from office.

Vermelles, in the West evacuated by the German troops owing to the violence of French artillery fire.

The French have heavy losses near Altkirch.

The coast, East of Port Said, flooded.

The Russians successfully driven out of Hungary.

The withdrawal of the Portuguese Cabinet announced.

Parliament had not voted any mobilization credit. England gives 600 million marks.

### 7<sup>th</sup> December.

The Russians try to retreat to Warsaw and Ivangorod. Russian troops in South Poland try to cover this retreat, but are defeated by the Allies near Piotrkow.

The Austrians undertake an offensive, to the East of Cracow against the Russians, and capture 1,500 prisoners.

The Germans take an important position East of Varennes.

The Turks approach Batum.

### 8<sup>th</sup> December.

The English steamer "Chareas" sunk by the auxiliary cruiser "Prinz Eitel."

An attack of the French repulsed, North of Nancy.

The Kaiser postpones his departure from Berlin on account of slight illness.

The Austrians continue to progress South of Belgrade.

Austro-Hungarian victory near Dobczyce-Wiliczka. 5,000 Russians taken prisoners.



The German Empress visits one of the "Order of St. John" Ambulance-trains in Breslau.



Distribution of warm drinks for poor children in Berlin.



German soldiers at the eastern seat of war, opening their Christmas parcels.



German soldiers celebrating Christmas on the battlefield at the Western theatre of war.



German artillery on the way to the front.



A Dutch-German frontier post in Belgium.



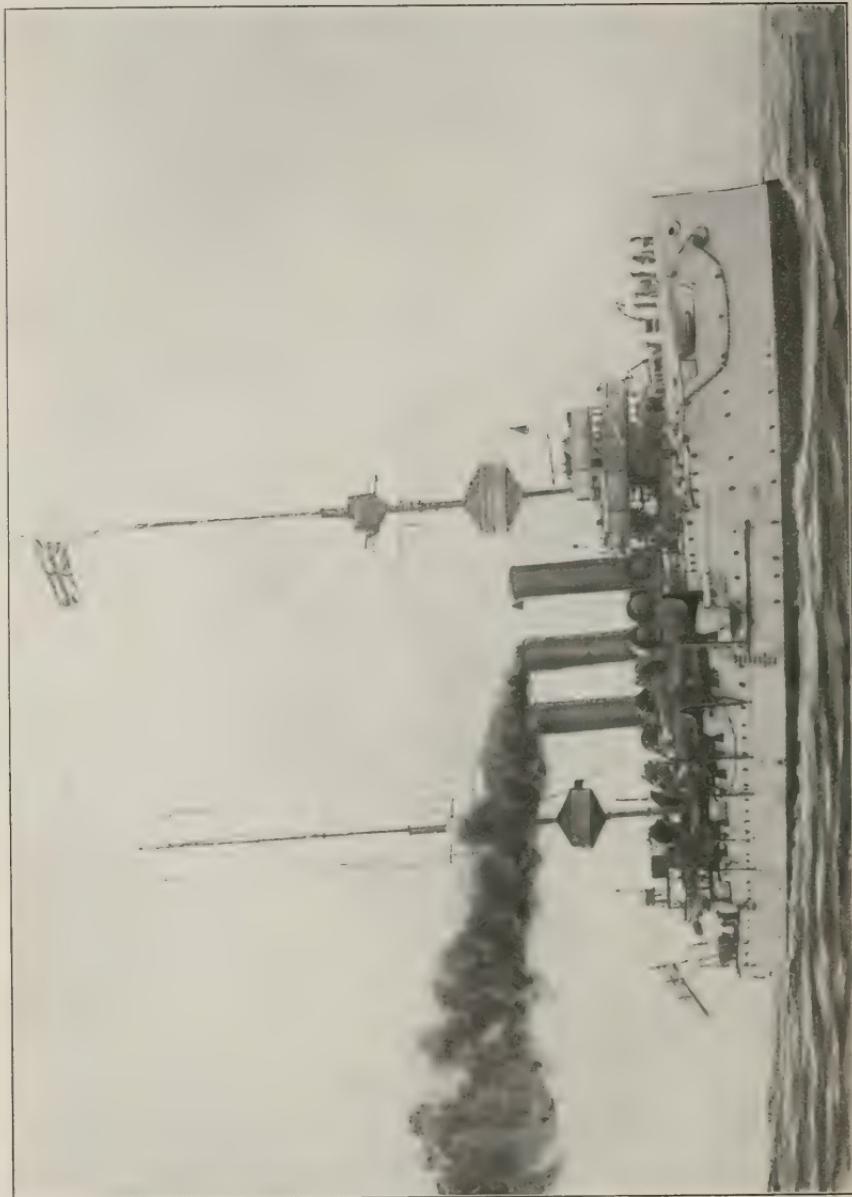
Sent of the Belgian Government in France; in front of the picture, a suburb of Le Havre.  
The Belgian Kingdom has at present but 40 square miles in its possession.



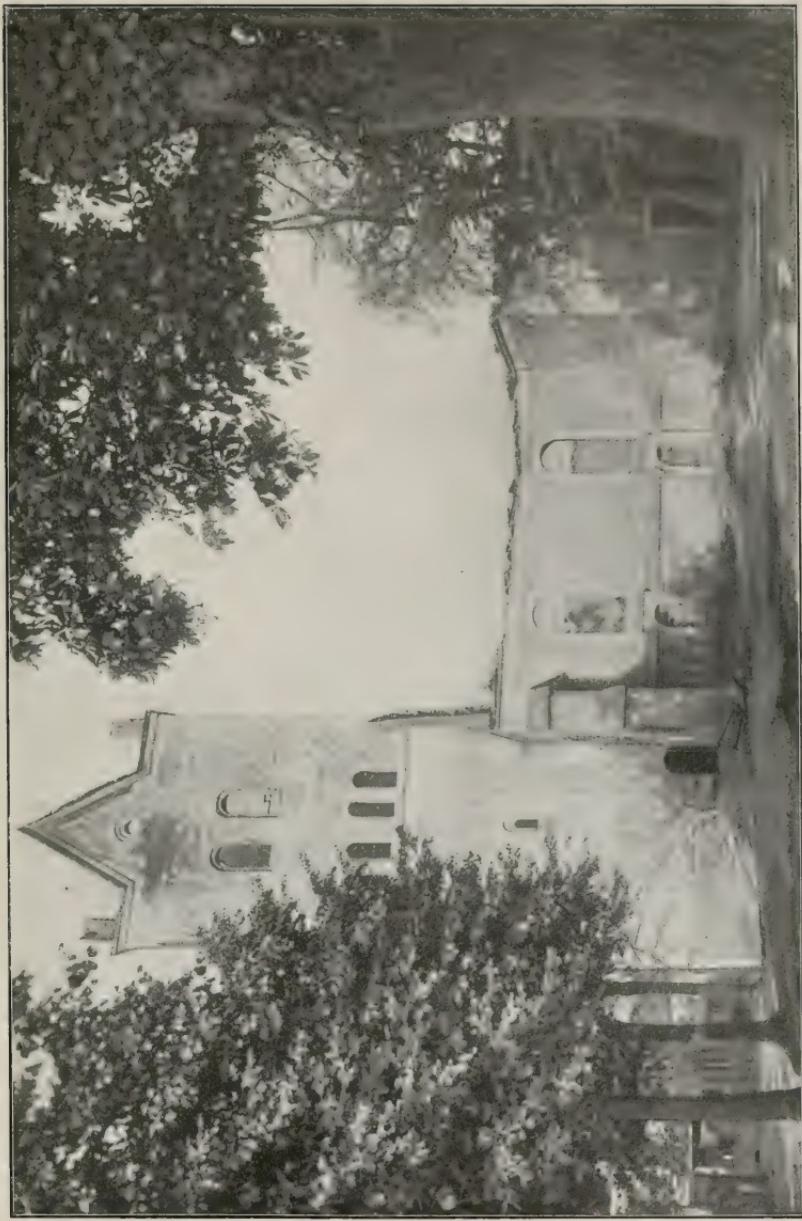
Airmen with bombs, about to drop them on a town.  
(From an English illustrated paper.)

Scarborough; town and fortifications.





The English cruiser "Hermes" which was torpedoed by a German submarine near Calais.



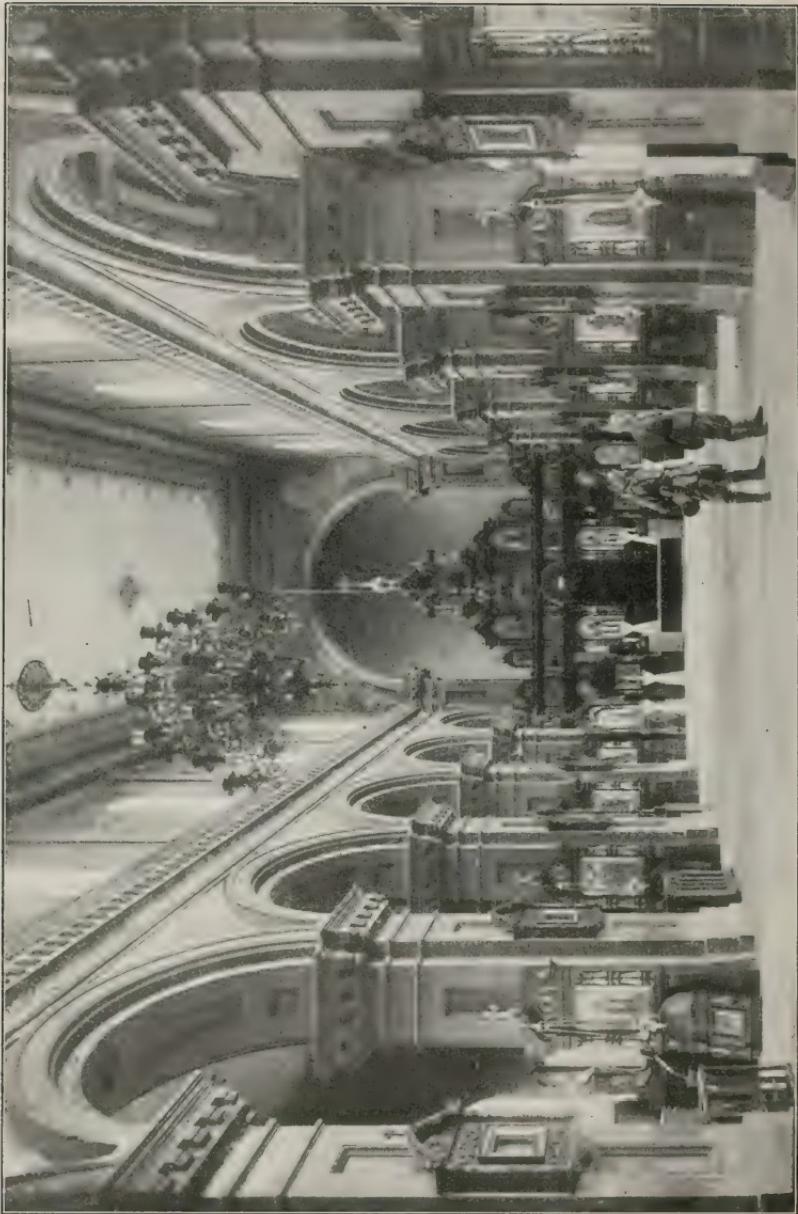
Church in Neidenburg; destroyed by the Russians.



Interior of a Church in Neidenburg, destroyed by the Russians.



Church in Suwalki, which was occupied by German troops and remained absolutely intact.



Interior of the principal Church of Suwalki, which remained intact.

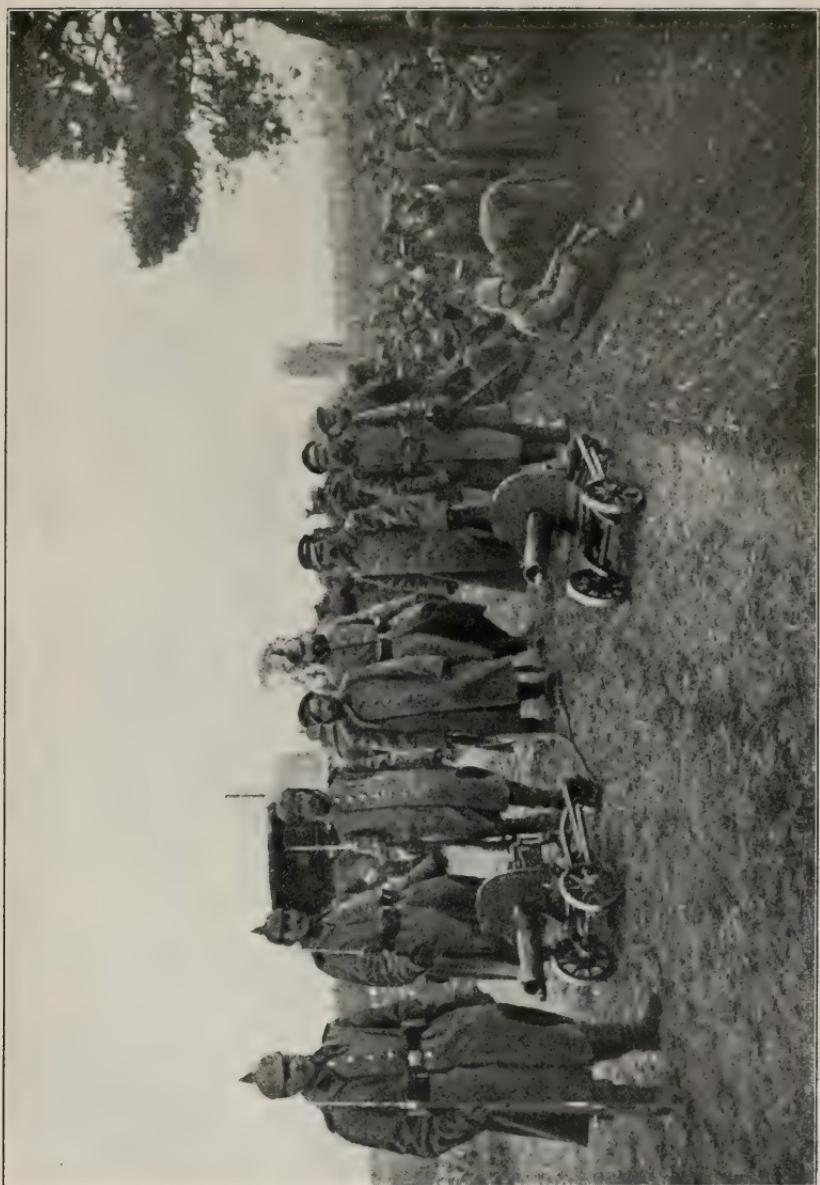


German airmen reporting the Russians' position by means of light balls.



German troops marching through a small Polish town near Lodz. The German troops bought what they needed from the Polish people, paying for everything in cash.

Russian troops taken prisoners at Lodzi.





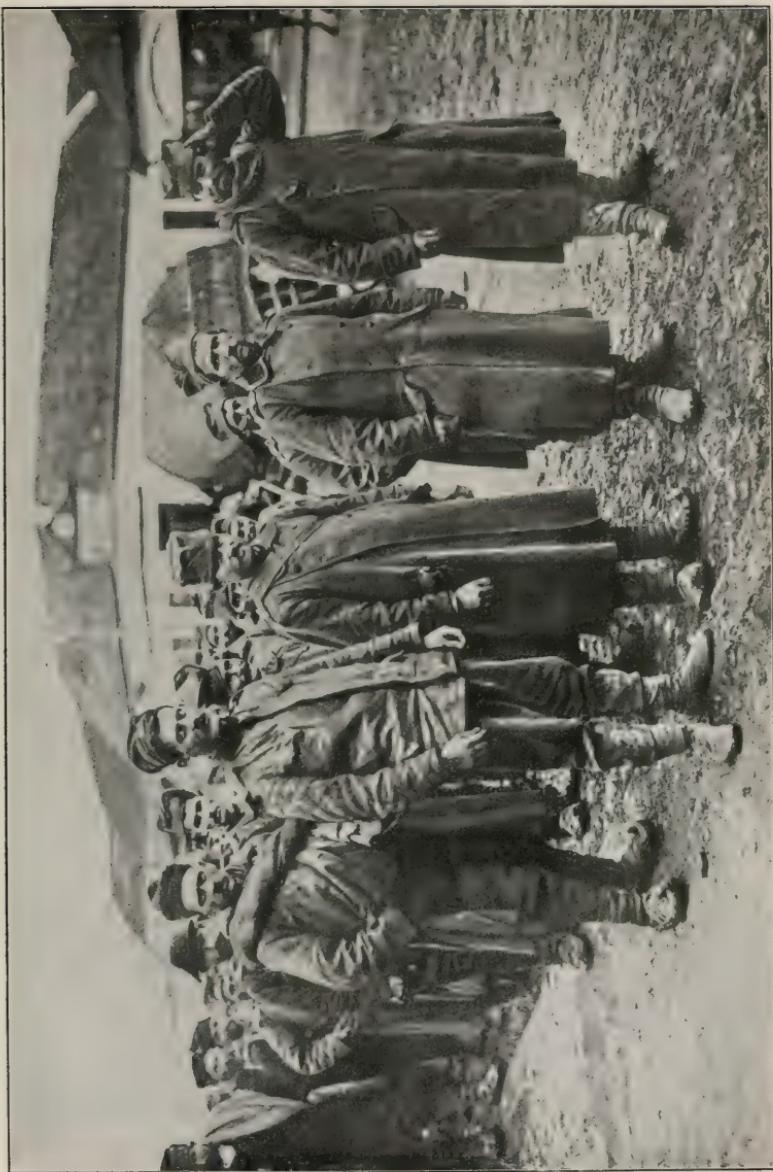
German troops marching into Lodz.



Different types of Siberian soldiers taken prisoners.



General Rennenkampf, who was relieved of his post on account of the Russian defeats.



Different types of Serbian soldiers taken prisoners.



French prisoners receiving their mid-day rations.



In the Canteen- Sale of food and non alcoholic beer.



French prisoners at drill.

### 9<sup>th</sup> December.

French attacks repulsed at Souain, Varennes and Vanquois.  
German-Russian fighting near Lowicz.

Kriegsminister von Falkenhayn becomes Chief of the General Staff, in place of General von Moltke.

The Austrians report progress in West Galicia.

### 10<sup>th</sup> December.

Japan proclaims her intention of not returning Kiau-Chau to China.

The Holy War spreads in the Sudan.

French aviators throw bombs over Freiburg i. B.

Przasmysz, on the right bank of the Vistula captured.

Russian attacks in South Poland repulsed.

Naval battle off the Falkland Islands.

The German cruisers "Scharnhorst," "Gneisenau," "Leipzig," and "Nürnberg" sunk. Admiral Graf Spee dead. The "Dresden" escapes.

### 11<sup>th</sup> December.

The French sentence on the German military doctors annulled.

The Gold reserves of the Reichsbank, exceed 2 milliards of marks, for the first time in the history of the Empire.

The attempts of the Triple Entente in Sofia, Bukarest and Athens to obtain help for Servia, can be considered as unsuccessful.

### 12<sup>th</sup> December.

The English threats to Persia have remained without effect.

Afghanistan takes proceedings against India.

An important position in the Argonne captured. 200 prisoners taken. French attacks in general repulsed.

The German authorities estimate the losses of the Russians in Poland near Lodz and Lowicz (80,000 prisoners included) at about 150,000. The casualties of the Russians were heavier than those at Tannenberg.

### 13<sup>th</sup> December.

Russian failures near Cracow. The garrison of Przemysl makes a sortie.

The French repulsed at Flirey-St. Mihiel.

German successes at Lowicz in North Poland. 11,000 Russian prisoners taken.

Batum shelled by the Turkish fleet.

The Austrians weaken their army in Servia so as to transport troops to Poland and must withdraw their line of attack.

### 14<sup>th</sup> December.

Hostile airmen again throw bombs on Freiburg i. B.

French attacks between the Maas and the Vosges are repulsed.

Continued progress on the Austro-Hungarian line of attack in East Galicia. Duklas in West Galicia re-captured.

### 15<sup>th</sup> December.

A meeting of the Kings of Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, to ensure their neutrality, which is endangered by the Triple Entente, is announced to take place at Malmö on 18<sup>th</sup> December.

Belgrade evacuated by the Austro-Hungarian troops without any fighting.

Enemy attacks repulsed South East of Ypres; a French attack on Apremont is unsuccessful; Steinbachs (Vosges) re-captured.

Turko-Russian fighting near Sarai on the Persian frontier takes place.

In Russia all radical members of the Duma are arrested.

A proclamation in France stating that all men from 18 to 52 years of age will be called to the troops.

The Russians continue to retreat in Western Galicia.

### 16<sup>th</sup> December.

A Turkish victory over the Russians is reported from Urmia.

A fresh attack of the French near Nieuport fails.

German progress in Poland, 3,000 prisoners taken.

Turko-Russian fighting in Wilajet Wan.

German war-ships shell Scarborough, Hartlepool and Whitby and return undamaged. Two English torpedo destroyers sunk, one badly damaged.

The Austrians push forward as far as Zaklicyn and Bochnia in Galicia.

The Austrians make a renewed sortie from Przemysl.

### 17<sup>th</sup> December.

Fürst Bülow arrives in Rome.

The collapse of the entire Russian offensive and retreat of the Russian army in Poland is reported by the German »Obersten Heeresleitung«.

Violent French attacks, directed against Zillebeke and La Bassée, are driven back.

### 18<sup>th</sup> December.

Three English trading ships sunk by mines.

In the Argonne 750 French prisoners taken.

On the Somme, 1,200 French taken prisoners, 1,800 killed. Our casualties amount to hardly two hundred.

In Egypt, the English protectorate is proclaimed.

### 19<sup>th</sup> December.

Petriau stormed by the Austrians, in pursuance of the Russians. Saarburg bombarded by hostile airmen, ten bombs fall.

A Russian cavalry attack near Pillkallen driven back.

The Russian pursuance in Poland continues.

The Austrians take 26,000 Russians prisoners in Western Galicia.

Reports of discontent are announced from Russia.

### 20<sup>th</sup> December.

A rising of 80,000 Senussi in the Sudan.

The Kaiser returns to the front.

Austrian successes at Lupkower Pass, Zakliczyn and Biala.

The English-French attacks at Nieuport and La Bassée are unsuccessful.

A French success at Notre Dame de Lorette.

Russian positions at Rawka and Nida.

### 21<sup>st</sup> December.

The English occupy Caprivizipfel (German South West Africa).

High-treason of the former member of the Reichstag Dr. Weill (Social Democrat) made known.

Arabian troops join the Turks.

Renewed French attacks at Nieuport driven back.

English positions at La Bassée captured.

German successes at Notre Dame de Lorette and near Le Four de Paris (Argonne).

The French make an unsuccessful sortie at Soulain-Massiges.

An "army order" of General Joffre's dated 17<sup>th</sup> December falls into our hands.

The German attacks make progress in Poland.

Fighting between the Russians and Austrians takes place at Lupkower Pass and at Dunajetz.

A German aviator flies over Calais.

### 22<sup>nd</sup> December.

Renewed conviction of German ambulance men in France. Hussein Kamel proclaimed English Sultan of Egypt.

A German airman is seen above Dover.

The crossing of the Bzura and Rawka secured at several places. French and English sorties at Festubert and Givenchy driven back.

French successes at Richebourg.

French attacks at Compiègne, Souain and Perthes as well as in the Argonne and at Verdun driven back.

Turkish successes at El Ageos and Ashi (Caucasus).

The Turkish main army on the march towards the Suez Canal.

French airmen over Strassburg i. E.

Russian attacks at the Dunajetz driven back.

Bayonet fighting on the Yser.

German troops shell Armentières and Arras.

### 23<sup>rd</sup> December.

The French Parliament meets for a war sitting.

The French submarine "Curie" destroyed by the Austrians, a French Dreadnought damaged.

Mohammedan program in the Russian army.

French and English attacks at Lombartzyde repulsed.

German success at Richebourg l'Avoue.

French attacks at Sillery, Souain and Perthes driven back.

Continuous fighting on the Bzura and Rawka.

The Reichsbank discount lessened.

Austro-Hungarian progress in the Carpathians.

Russian defeat at Tomaszw (Galicia).

The Austrian General Potiorek is dismissed from office. Arch-Duke Eugen, Commander in General of the troops, fighting against Servia.

### 24<sup>th</sup> December.

The Russians defeated at Mlawa and Soldau.

The Russians suffer heavy defeats on the Bzura and Rawka.

The Crown Prince sends a Christmas circular to his army.

Japan refuses to send transports of troops to Europe.

### **25<sup>th</sup> December.**

Reichskanzler von Bethmann Hollweg once more states in a circular to the German diplomatic representatives, in answer to M. Viviani's speech, that it was the military preparations taken by the Entente Powers, which caused the war.

Italian sailors land in Valona.

England draws up a new list of war contraband.

Light English forces make a fruitless attack in the German Bay, whereby two English destroyers and an accompanying steamer are damaged.

A German aeroplane throws bombs on Sheerness.

### **26<sup>th</sup> December.**

The Queen of Italy gives birth to a Princess.

The Czar goes to the front.

The Sultan receives the new papal Delegate Dolci.

French attacks in the west repulsed.

In Poland the German attacks make slow progress.

### **27<sup>th</sup> December.**

The German auxiliary cruiser "Prinz Wilhelm" destroys six English trading ships off the south east coast of South America.

An English torpedo boat runs on to the rocks off the Scotch coast.

French attacks at Nieuport.

### **28<sup>th</sup> December.**

The united fleets at the Dardanelles increased.

The French offensive looked upon as fruitless.

Russian attacks south of Inowlodz are driven back.

### **29<sup>th</sup> December.**

The new English Ambassador presents his credentials at the Vatican.

The new Egyptian Khedive Hussein Kemal is outlawed.

President Wilson protests against the objections to American trade, taken by English measures.

Unimportant fighting in the West.

The German General Staff announces that Lowicz and Skieriewice have been taken by the Germans more than six days ago.

**30<sup>th</sup> December.**

The German Government in Belgium abolishes the tax on flour in favour of the better nourishment of the Belgian people.

The French Government admits the loss of the submarine "Curie."

**31<sup>st</sup> December.**

Since 11<sup>th</sup> November Germany took 136,000 prisoners in Poland, more than 100 guns and 300 machine guns.

The Kaiser and the King of Bavaria exchange telegraphic New Year greetings.

# German Soldiers Letters

published in the press by the soldiers parents and relations

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## 1. From the Western Seat of War.

### To the German Barbarians.

During the battle of the Aisne, the engineers of a German infantry division were quartered in the little village of Vassens. When, after a fairly long sojourn, these troops left Vassens, the inhabitants handed a letter of gratitude to the officers, of which the following is a translation:—

To the Lieutenants Grimm and Kindermann, and the Vice-Sergeant Claussen:

Before your departure we are anxious to express our regret that you are leaving. We can only speak well of your conduct during your stay with us. The officers as well as the soldiers have been friendly and obliging, and Germany has a right to be proud of you. We shall never forget these eight weeks, during which, in spite of the war, perfect order and health, thanks to the great care you have taken, has prevailed in our dear village. We likewise render our grateful thanks to the troops who have given you their support. Those too, who, according to higher command, had to be kept guarded in the Church, were well treated and received good food. In remembrance of all this, we wish and pray to God, to grant you a safe and happy return to your relations.

Vassens, 8<sup>th</sup> November 1914.

signed: Pottier Césare, Farm-owner in Vassens,  
Post: Morsain (Aisne).

(*Hamburger Nachrichten, 29<sup>th</sup> November 1914.*)

## All Kinds of Pictures from the North of France

are to be seen from the following field letter, which was sent to the *Kreuzzeitung*:—

The English, this mercenary nation, these armed clerks, who are not ashamed of setting the uncultivated blacks on us, they will bleed to death on our bayonets. You should just hear the population in the North of France, talking of them now, and the "estimation" with which they speak of their allies. Mr. Grey and Churchill must often feel their ears tingling. Our fellows have held out and fought splendidly; they were only a little depressed, when

from 5<sup>th</sup> till 9<sup>th</sup> September the right wing had to retreat, but their spirits were good again, when they were sent to the Aisne and Marne. There was a great want of tobacco there at the time. I should not like to say how much tea was smoked there in the trenches.

For the last 4 weeks we are lying before . . . . , a large railway centre. The French defend this place very obstinately. In the beginning we spared the town as much as possible, probably thinking it would do us good service, as an "Etappenstation." But now the English are there too. Since their arrival the shelling has been enormous. On Saturday some black troops were added to this garrison, these, the "high allies" look upon as "cannon food." The night before last, these poor innocent creatures were let loose on us, and as they only advance in dense masses, were cut down in hundreds by our machine guns . . . .

. . . . Here espionage seems to flourish, and why not? The inhabitants of the country see everything and can give great help by giving pre-arranged signs. A fortnight ago, a man was shot, who had made a practice of hunting as many cows up the hill, as we had guns standing in the valley. According to the laws of war, he had to be condemned to death.

France is in a bad way. The harvest has for the most part rotted on the ground. The corn, which is in stack, we take for forage. Whatever remains standing, is at once set on fire by the French guns, as they think there are Germans behind every particle of cover. They destroy their own land, women and very old men are the only people left in the hamlets; the troops have taken every available man. These poor people are entirely cut off from the outer world and have no communication whatever.

What had we not all imagined at the name of the "Grande Nation" and now we see a dirty, indifferent people, without a spark of religion! If the separation of the church and state has not perhaps conduced somewhat to the downfall of France? The priests must all march out as common soldiers. Recently, when our Catholic chaplain celebrated mass in a half shelled church, the population (mostly women) streamed thither in crowds. My faithful orderly Stanislaus (a Pole) gave me a full description of it. He is a good Christian and often goes to say a prayer alone in forsaken churches, and sometimes attends Protestant field service. Our Protestant chaplain is really a splendid fellow, always to be found at the place where he is expected. On Sundays he often preaches in three or four different places, and I must remark that it is not at all easy to find a place suitable for holding Divine service. On 18<sup>th</sup>, we had just assembled when hostile airmen began to worry us. There was nothing else to be done, but to leave off and hide.

Last Sunday we were wiser—and had Divine service in the dark. War makes a change in many a rough soul, who did not

bother about God before. The men often sing hymns of an evening, sometimes to the accompaniment of a mouth-organ. The favourites are "Großer Gott, wir loben dich" and "Wir treten zum Beten."

Now another point. You want to know, if we suffer from cold. No, my dear mother. Lately the men have been supplied with quantities of presents, nearly everyone has two pairs of socks, foot-warmers, mittens, belts, vests, and many other useful things. It is touching to see the love and care with which all are packed up. The poems too, there is a note in almost every pair of socks! The day after the last distribution, I had to take two sacks full of letters and cards to the post. The men had written to thank all the kind donors. For the present the active troops have enough, but I hope the Reserve and Supply and "Landwehr"-troops are not forgotten, so that the old comrades need not march out with empty hands.

(*Kreuzzzeitung*, 6<sup>th</sup> November 1914.)

### An Army Chaplain's Impressions in the Trenches.

For some days now, it has been quiet at the front. Of course, heavy and light shells illuminate the darkness of night, here and there every now and then. The tick-tack, tick-tack of the guns and machine guns, is also to be heard, but after one or two hours the noise which is only heard after long pauses, is a proof that there is not a great battle going on. Every night a few patrols, see or hear German ghosts and defend themselves with this tie-tak. In the day-time the enemy sends morning, noon, and evening greetings, sometimes in this, sometimes in other camps and villages. At the edge of the forest at 10 km. distance from the enemy, our horses have been standing for the past few days. Suddenly the enemy discovered them, and a grenade swept off eight. Otherwise "country fright" is all what is noticeable with the enemy, who can obviously find out very little from his heights of safety, but revenges himself by throwing bombs and steel arrows 15 cm. in length. On this account unfortunately, we could not hold Divine Service anymore in the open air, as these "Heroes" from above had just waited for this. In short: in the vicinity of the "Etappen" there is no want of touch with the enemy. But here, there is no comparison with the different causes for uneasiness, which occur continually behind the fighting line, and have now lasted for weeks. Even if they have their off-days, on which they are relieved, still, demands are made on the courage, health and nerves, which can hardly be sufficiently estimated. The commander of the division told me about several cases of nervous prostration. I hear most have had to endure the rainy weather, which lasted incessantly day and night for weeks in the trenches. Their bones grew cold and their skin trembled. The worst is, that sometimes when the fighting lasts for days, it is impossible, to bring up warm food. It means "Hold out!" Land-

wehrmen were among the number. Probably the thoughts of their wives and children may have stricken their courage and nervous system. And yet there were only some few exceptions, who gave way to this weakness. I saw at once clearly; the chaplain is wanted here. The commander of the division said: "It would be advisable if they could see you up there"—"But how is it possible to get there?"—"Please come at once, this evening!"—"Very well!" The kitchens were beginning to steam, that were going up in the twilight. The corporal, who is bringing them, is my guide. A clear, starlight night, in a slow trot we leave the village—through the glen and up the hill. The white chalk road leads across little hills. For about 100 yards in front of us, the long end of a forest towards the hill. The moon sends down its cold rays illuminating the whole. Every now and again on the rutty road the well-known "War Craters," which are large and broad enough to hold the bodies of dead horses lying around. At the last of the little mounds near the forest, the enemies' hills can be seen. Their rifles are 600 yards before us. To the right and left behind me, I see the fire of our artillery, kept low and shaded towards the front. The wood in its stillness and silence! Oh, what a scene of peaceful landscape lay stretched before me under the bright starlit heavens, and what a gruesome silence of cruel guns, whith have only been set at rest! What can I say to the comrades over there? The way to the enemy leads across the hill on each side lined with dark pine trees.

The scene before me stretches for miles, across the country, occupied by the enemy. Just a hundred yards in front, a little lower down on the slope, the German heroes are on the watch, in frost, rain, and danger, watching to defend us. The rattling of our cart has attracted the attention of the enemy. The first bullets come buzzing along—we trot on towards our goal. "Befiehl du deine Wege und was dein Herze kränkt der allertreusten Pflege, des, der den Himmel lenkt."

Dismount! My orderly hands over the horses to another soldier. We take tracts, greetings from home, some copies of the New Testament and last not least, our packages of chocolate and cigarettes. An officer brings me to the major's hut, where I wait a few minutes, while he disappears into the ground. It appears to be a layer of clay, protected by the bushes in front. I step in, go down the 3 steps, at the end of which, entering a tent partly open, I find myself in an arched building. In the middle, the trunk of a pine tree, about 1,70 m. high, over this a wooden ceiling, at the sides, benches made of mud on one of which was placed a mattress, on the other straw; the whole hut about 3 m. square. The pillar in the middle has a board round it, which serves as a table, on which a light is placed. At the and of one of the couches, a kind of fire-place, in which a bright fire is burning, the flames skilfully arranged to burn towards the outside, while warming the hut. In a few minutes I am told, which companies are to be

visited. The Protestant soldiers of two companies are to assemble after each other, in front of Oberleutnant S.'s hut, who is leader of the company. The others I can visit in the trenches.

A gradual declining subterranean passage leads to the middle of the position. It is built in zigzag so that the hostile shells cannot do so much harm. After going a few steps, I come to a forked way, where two trenches meet. There they are standing shoulder to shoulder, our faithful warriors and defenders. Their guns are lying ready, ranged against the enemy, to the right and left of each gun, a sack full of sand and loose earth thrown up, so that the edge of the trench is made almost invisible for the enemy, to see, and in the trenches, some crouched in corners trying to protect themselves from the icy wind, some leaning against the edge, or repairing the entrenchments, spade in hand, our soldiers—lying or standing enveloped in straw.

They are delighted with the greetings from home. A bright-eyed youth says: "We shall not let you through here!" Another asks me in a low voice: "Do you think, we shall be home for Christmas?"—I speak a few words on fidelity, duty, and the courage that will help them through. But at this moment the French bullets prove, that the direction, from which our conversation has come, has been recognized. The other men are waiting before the hut. I question each of them as to his health, news from home, wishes, etc. But now the bullets come whizzing in our direction, so that in order to have a little peace, we must go into the hut, where I hold a short evening service for the first, second, and third sections consecutively. Most of the men asked for the New Testament and Tracts. Often during the long day they should have liked to read, if they had had them. One of them asked for Holy Communion, the others joined him in prayer. I was really touched seeing these men pray. Who is a man? He, who can pray!

I shall never forget, how firmly they pressed my hands and all the thanks to which I could not listen. Then it was time for us to return to our horses. Their neighing, as well as their willing steps towards home, brought several shots from the French, which luckily missed their object. When we disappeared over the hill into the wood again, all was quiet.

Our heroes down below were on the watch!

May their watching and fighting soon bring victory and peace to our country.

11<sup>th</sup> October 1914.

W. Nell, Freiwilliger Feld-Divisionspfarrer.

(*Der Reichsbote, 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1914.*)

## A Young Artist's Field Letter.

*The Soul's School (written by a young Painter).*

P . . . . ., Middle of November.

What a month that was, October! Full of the deepest impressions of the soul, body and mind strained to the utmost. It finished with the storming of Z . . . . ., during which Beethoven's "Freudig wie ein Held zum Siegen" rang continually in my ears. A few bad days followed, then we were taken off, to have some rest at 30 km. distance from the firing line; where the fortunes of war will now lead us, we have not the slightest idea. We hear of gallant deeds to be done—well, whatever comes—faithful and true, looking on each day of my life as a gift, as a pound which must be increased . . . . .

I am glad that I have an opportunity of tasting so much of the difficult, of the hard side of life. War has a cleansing power, it frees me from myself, and if thoughts crop up as to a creative life after the war, it shows me the way. I am clearer and in better humour than ever. My men say: "He is always laughing, even when the shells burst just beside him". I have seen such wonders, that I smile unquestioningly, doing my duty, taking life as it comes . . . .

At present I am billeted with a comrade in a nice new house owned by good, agreeable people. We spend our time as if there were no war, have music, sing Schubert's Lieder, drink tea, and chat with the inhabitants. In the evenings we meet our comrades and dine, as if we were in a Casino. Some of the other officers go hunting, I make some attempts at learning to ride. We are proud of what we have done in this war, we Bavarians, our cavalry division and rifles. Our cavalry officers are devoted to each of their leaders . . . . War makes demands on the Soul in keeping with the enormous, physical exertion it enacts. Physical strength is fed by the mind, otherwise it would often fail to meet the demands required. Of course, what is expected from the leader, the officer, who is to lead the men, is quite enormous.

I know why I go in front, when we have a specially difficult job and why we give our men tea, coffee and wine as often as we can. One day we sleep in the dirty wet trenches, the next in a soft bed. To-day we have a "dinner," to-morrow chew a hard crust of bread—and feel better than in times of peace.

The principal thing is to have continual communication with home. I write as often as I can and am happy at the reception of any news from home, telling of our dear ones, waiting patiently. It seems as if the decision of the war lay with whoever has strength to hold out longest.

Lately we were opposed to the English army, our enemies' best troops, professional soldiers, who have been in service for

years, mostly in the Colonies, who need not care for wives and children and are excellently trained. Added to this they have the English phlegma and cool-headedness, keeping their ranks in the most dreadful fire. At Z... they allowed themselves to be cut down by our dreadful machine guns, but no one moved an inch. Man for man, they lay in the trenches, each of them shot through the head. The English soldier is excellently equipped and has everything he needs. They have flying-machines, which are fitted with machine guns, and hunt our airmen just as a hawk after a pigeon. I watched such a hunt about a week ago and it made a great impression on me.

Our machine guns did wonders recently. One of these days the attack started from Z... marching through a large forest towards Y.... At one corner the enemy held large masses of troops in readiness and made a "sortie." The whole attack was coming on towards us. We only remarked it, when the enemy was 120 yards off us, and had three times our number of men. Our machine gun leader, who is a hero, brought up his six guns in position in a few moments. They were ranged fanlike on the whole space occupied by the enemy in closed troops. One gun can deliver 2,800 shots consecutively, another 6,000. They fell in hundreds, but new troops kept on arriving. The guns continue firing, one of the men has been shot in three places—still he does not leave his gun, pours on fresh water and keeps on firing. The stream of the English is brought to a standstill.... and the day is saved. But we paid a high price for it. The leader of the machine gun company dead.... my heart tugged when I heard it. He was the most courageous, simplest, purest hero,—skilful and fearless—at home his young wife is waiting for him; our captain dead.... we buried him quietly by the light of the moon.... Oh, it was one of our bad days....

Fare well, dear friend! We are happy to risk our lives for the welfare and culture of our country. May those who reap the fruits prove worthy. (*Tägliche Rundschau, 26<sup>th</sup> November 1914.*)

### A Sermon in the Trenches.

Our trenches might almost be described as cosy. The last few days, we had built them out deeper and in honour of our dear Major increased their breadth quite a little. Parts of a bedstead and some wicker-work lattices, covered with straw and earth, furnished protection against shrapnel shells, as well as rain and cold nights. When, however, the grenades began their devilish malicious and poisonous cracking, the comfort was less tempting; and the French artillery shoot well, that we must admit. As long as they sent their iron cylinders into the village after us, the angry howling of the chastised air had the effect of lulling us to sleep.

Curious! It was only when the flames came darting out like a blaze of petroleum, glaring into our trenches, followed by the murderous cracking and deafening smell of sulphur, that all crept to the wall of the trench facing the enemy, so as to get as much protection as possible, against the voracious and malicious iron. Otherwise it was quite cosy under ground. We always greeted our "D-Züge" with great joy; that was the name we had given the shots of our heavy artillery, as they rushed over us like the rhythmic Ttt-Ttt-Ttt of a "D-Zug." These "greetings from home" had an extraordinary effect in raising our spirits. Many stories were told, jokes made, and happy laughter could be heard among the troglodytes, old numbers of the "Kölnische Zeitung" were read and eagerly discussed. The tobacco-pouch was passed round from hand to hand. What a good thing it was that I had filled it a short time before this subterranean life had begun.

Suddenly a little package is brought in by a "feldgrau" soldier. The Major and I look after the sad contents . . . An identification disc, money bag, note book, letters, a photograph . . . I read the last lines of a young volunteer, who had been found cold and stiff, and who fell for his Fatherland, with great enthusiasm. The last words of the young fellow, for whom life had much in store "Eine Kugel kam geflogen . . ." There life had to shut its hands full of happy promises in the presence of Death, could not continue to give the world wide, blissful fortune of youth. And far, far away in the Fatherland, a girl, who is still impatiently waiting for loving greetings—a girl, who has grown lonely, oh, so lonely for love. And she did not know it yet—was still full of hope in this moment, hoping on, as only love can hope.

With tears in my eyes and a sad, sad heart I read the young fellow's legacy. . . so simple, full of pious youthful impressions and occurrences, so heart-breaking, forboding the gloomy Fate—and yet so brave, that the tears ran down my cheeks. Then: A hearty request to the comrades, who might find him, to send his last greetings and thoughts to his lonely love:—"When you receive these lines I shall be dead . . . you are free . . . my last thought and breath is a wish and blessing for you . . . Yours R. H."

It had grown quiet, very quiet around me, while I was putting the last wishes and prayers of a hero and the photograph of his dear one, together with a brave kind letter from her in an envelope. The memory of a comrade and sorrow at his early death had spread. I added a few words of deep condolence to the sad packet. We all felt, although we had not known him, that there was something great and powerful which united us with him, and through which we experienced now, more quietly and with deeper real feeling than in the noise of battle the meaning of the soldier's song:—"Ich hatt' einen Kameraden."

Death stared us all in the face, dumb, seriously, and we remembered the lines. "Morgenrot, Morgenrot, leuchtest mir zum frühen

Tod . . ." Which of us would be the next? You?—I?—And at home the love that is waiting! You brave German girl far away! May God give you strength to bear this great sorrow! You have given your country the greatest sacrifice, the sacrifice of your love without a murmur! Your sacrifice has preached a great and touching sermon, has been a silent, but moving example in the trenches.

(*Kölnische Zeitung, 3rd December 1914.*)

### Thirteen Hours on Guard.

A soldier, who together with a comrade had got orders to mislead the enemy (Belgians) at a river crossing, describes his adventure in the following field letter:

"The hostile position was just on the other bank of the river, and the enemy was well on the lookout so that we should not get too near. Our brave pioneers had made all preparations, and the question was when we should be able to get across without incurring heavy losses. Before the village, quite near the water, a Castle was situated and as the river here was hardly more than 60 yards wide, it seemed to me to be the most suitable place to try and effect a landing. At 9 o'clock in the evening the second line was alarmed and sent to cover the pioneers. It was a black, dark night, just the kind suitable for playing a prank on the enemy—we marched quietly as far as the garden of the Castle, where we came to a halt. Such a beautiful park, it could well be compared to a primeval forest. A patrol was sent out to scour the park. It was our luck to be sent to do this work. We accomplished our task and brought back the report that there were none of the enemy in the park.

Then we marched in. In the park itself, a few ditches had to be bridged over, which the pioneers quickly did by laying down doors, which outposts were left to guard. I and a comrade were to come on duty from 5—7 a.m. It was now the work began. The pioneers were to bury their mines in the park, so that the river could be crossed under cover of their fire.

The night passed quietly, except for a few shots. At 5 a.m. we went to our posts. Our leader had explained to us beforehand that the principal thing was for us to keep cool and not betray our whereabouts by hasty firing. We started off. My comrade lay in front of one of the gate piers, I at the other, and in this way we stared out into the night towards the river over which a dense fog was hanging. We had no idea how near we were to the enemy. Suddenly I heard someone cough quite near me. We gripped our guns tighter—but nothing came. It grew brighter, now we could see the line of the opposite banks. I advised my comrade to keep well behind the pier, as the dawn came on. We could see the Belgian positions and hear the men talking. They seemed to have slept well and peered out over the breastwork, smoking their cigars.

It was time for us to be relieved, but we did not want to leave, as we should have betrayed ourselves by moving. In spite of our perfect quiet, the Belgians remarked us. A young fellow had caught sight of me and now a Belgian corporal fixed his field glasses on us. Our fingers itched, but we had our orders not to shoot. All the more did the Belgians fire. We were in a queer fix—it was impossible to try to return—the bullets hit the gate posts like hail stones. It did not last long till our artillery began too. So as to get some cover, I began digging a hole in the ground with my hands so that I could kneel. Then I got my comrade to throw me over his spade and dug the hole deeper to make room for both of us—the Belgians firing all the time. My comrade crawled over to me on all fours and when we could sit in our little entrenchment, our good spirits returned. First we lit a cigar and waited to see what turn events would take.

In the meantime our artillery and the enemies guns kept on firing and making a noise, which made one think of the Day of Judgment. The shells burst 30 yards off us. About noon, our Feldwebel crept along to see after us—he came into our hole and watched the effects of our artillery. The hostile batteries had just ceased. The Feldwebel called my attention to a Belgian corporal, I pointed my gun, but he had vanished. The Feldwebel had to return and now we were alone again. The corporal appeared again, after a while—I took aim—a report—and the Belgian laid his head on the epaulment. We knew what that meant! We had now been long enough in the clatter and were beginning to feel both hungry and thirsty, but we had to wait until 6 p.m., when an officer and two men came to take us out of our hole. We could hardly stand, but we had succeeded in deluding the enemy. On getting back to our company, we got a great reception, as they had all despaired of us. The river was crossed about 11 p.m. My section remained to cover the pioneers, who had to build a bridge over which carriages could pass. »

*(Berliner Tageblatt, 1<sup>st</sup> December 1914.)*

### A Remarkable Escape.

An extraordinary escape, from being taken prisoner, is described in a field letter, published by the Deutschen Verlagsanstalt in Stuttgart in the latest number (beginning of December) of a Periodical bearing the title: "Über Land und Meer".

Two men belonging to a Landwehr division, who were sent out as patrols on bicycles, to find out the enemy's position, found themselves surrounded by the French. On all sides the Red breeches were to be seen, and the bullets whizzed and buzzed over their heads. The enemy had not remarked these two daring fellows, and thought they were friends. They turned sideways into the corn field and came on an entrenchment, the steep edges of which were

so torn up by the heat and heavy rains that it would be easy to remove the clay, with comparatively little strength. Behind, on each side of them, enemies everywhere, while violent rifle shooting began. They seemed irretrievably lost. Suddenly they hit upon a splendid idea: If we could get under cover of the loose clay of the entrenchment—that would be the only possibility perhaps of escaping from the enemy. No sooner said than done. First the bicycles were dragged down from the entrenchment, into the wheat field, then we hurried back and lay down in the narrow gutter, loosening the clay edges of the trench with both hands. Soon we had buried ourselves so deep in the clay, that only our hands, shoulders, and faces were bare. But they had to be covered too. It was a risky idea, which had occurred to us, and which in case it did not succeed, placed before us the alternative of death by choking. We had chosen our earth bed in a cleft so that our heads almost touched. All the clay to the right and left of us had been used to cover our bodies and a hard piece in the middle had to be moved with united strength, so as to afford cover for what was still to be seen of us. We hoped to be able to lay the dry clay sod on top, so that it would be like a tray over our bodies. If this should not succeed—if the muddy clay should break and crumble, then we could only expect to be altogether prevented from using our arms, or perhaps have to choke buried under the clay. However, there was no time for much hesitation and we began our job at once. One powerful tug and much to our joy the hard earth lay over us just as we wished looking like a tray. At the side of the ditch, where we had pulled down the clay, were two tiny holes, which allowed sufficient air to penetrate into our "Vault". It was high time.

The firing from the village came nearer and nearer; the hostile rifles sought cover quite near our hiding place and opened a murderous fire. We could hear the commands distinctly given by the captain, who was standing right above us. The empty cartridges fell into the ditch, our feet and bodies were so trampled on that my friend groaned aloud, while I ground my teeth more than once, so as not to cry out with pain. The thoughts which we had in these dreadful moments, were bad enough at first, but when the shooting lasted about half an hour, the only thought I was capable of, was "if our fellows don't come soon, than we are lost".

If it had not been dark, the hostile rifles must certainly have discovered us, for our feet were uncovered by this time. For instance, I could distinctly feel when the empty cartridges and pieces of clay fell on my knees, as well as the slightest movements of the gunners resting on my feet. But not alone that, suddenly the hard clay with which we had covered our bodies, broke in two, and half of it lay together with the weight of the hostile leader on our arms like a vice. Nothing else remained for us to do then, but try to blow the clay away from our mouths and noses . . . Just then a large piece of earth broke off the hard heap, through which we

had air and space. My comrade gave a loud scream: Lost!—Now they would look for us; the enemy would find us, but this thought had hardly crossed my brain, when we distinctly heard our storming comrades shouting: Hurah! Hurah!

The feet ceased to trample us, the enemy moved off and now —patsch—patsch—.

My friend simply yelled: Help! Help! Comrades, take care—. Take Care I called as loudly as I could. They were really our comrades, who came jumping into the trench sending a murderous fire after the retreating enemy.

### The Gurkhas.

(An Example for the “Humane” Warfare of the English.)

The following description, given in the Sunday number of the “Journal” of November 2<sup>nd</sup>, needs no commentary. This too is a “Document of Culture” of the first rank, a most shameful proof of the “gentleman-like” nation, written by the Special Reporter Arnould Galopin:

Hazebrouk, 20<sup>th</sup> November.

One cannot imagine, how skilfully the Germans manage to make their trenches unapproachable. In a breadth of about 10 m. before the entrenchments, in close rows, pointed rods can be seen, which stick in a kind of wolf’s trap, and between which criss-cross barbed wire is drawn, in double braiding with sharp points of a murderous effect at an attack. In order to break through these obstacles, the attack must be made in great masses, whereby however the hostile mitrailleusen, “Kaffeemühlen” our soldiers call them, make horrible devastation.

A few days ago, the Highlanders tried to attack the intrenchment from H., which is supposed to be impregnable. Under dreadful fire they made repeated attacks, in order to break through this German spider’s net. The Scots were cut down in masses, without thinking of a retreat; they are excellent soldiers and only think of retreating when they get the command to do so. The Highlanders are perhaps not so reckless and daring as the French infantry, but they are “steady and resolute” as Lord Roberts laudably expressed himself when he inspected them for the last time. One thing is certain, not one soldier would have returned alive, if they had not received the help of their Indian ... dogs.

Suddenly as we saw a dark mass creeping on the ground, my English friend Reginald said: “Oh, it is all right, we have let our dogs loose.” It was the Indian troops, the Gurkhas, without either arms or cartridge boxes, but solely with the horrible curved daggers between their teeth. And suddenly, just as the Highlanders began to retreat, the Indian soldiers break through their ranks like fallow shades, creep through the wire netting like cats, and then run against

the enemies with the broad shining murderous instruments in their hands and hoarse inhuman screams ... Mada! Mada! which means Death! ... Death! The Gurkhas jumped into the trenches. It was the most horrible massacre imaginable, one of the fights of which history can only relate as taking place in the most cruel, the so-called bestial epoch of humanity.

The Germans defended themselves with indomitable bravery and it was only a few, who were brought as prisoners to the outposts.

"There you see for yourself," said Reginald to me with his British equanimity, "the Gurkhas are excellent servants ... they have only one fault: it is impossible to hold them back, once they have been let loose" ...

*(Deutsche Tageszeitung, 5<sup>th</sup> December 1914.)*

### From a Portfolio.

(Letters received from P. Daniel Becker, O. F. M.)

In Montmédy a "Liebesgabe" fell into our hands, which consisted of winter socks knitted by a child in Gelsenkirchen, a little package of cigarettes and a piece of soap, together with the following letter from this child:

"Dear Mr. Soldier,

I am only a girl and cannot go to the war, but I love my fatherland just as much as you do. I should love to help too. As you must often be in the open air in this cold weather, I send you these socks and trust you will like them."

We sent this child a card, praising her industry as well as that of the other children in Gelsenkirchen, and added the request to go on knitting, but also praying that God may bless the dear soldiers and bring them to victory. In answer to this the following letter was received:

"Dear Rev. Father,

I received your dear card and thank you very much for same. I could hardly await the morning to be able to read it to our teacher and my class-mates. Their eyes were sparkling with joy when the card was read to them. It gave great encouragement for further "Liebesgaben". We continue to pray and work, so that our army may be victorious."

*(Düsseldorfer Tageblatt, 13<sup>th</sup> December 1914.)*

## A French Priest's Sermon.

(From an Army Chaplain's Letter.)

The Curé of ..... lives here in the forsaken castle, 15 minutes distance from the Parish church. The lady who owns the castle, arranged some rooms for him, when, at the time of the separation of Church and State, the Church and Presbytery were declared to be possessions of the State. The State is letting the Church go to ruin, the roof is in a dreadful condition, the ceiling has fallen away in several places, the windows are broken, and the Curé is not allowed to have any repairs carried out. Of the 3,000 Parishioners, 300—400 make their Easter Communion and among this number are only 10—20 men. The Mayor is a spiteful socialist, the working population a mixture of all nations, containing even Greeks. In short the living of . . . is anything but an enviable post. On Sunday I held Divine Service in this Church. The whole Church was full, not a single place empty. To the right—the soldiers led by their officers; to the left—women and children belonging to the Parish. I preached a short sermon, after which I celebrated Holy Mass, during which the soldiers sang their German hymns with such enthusiasm that it made one happy. At the end of course "Großer Gott . . ." so that the window-panes shook. A great many of the soldiers with their officers received Holy Communion before and during Mass. Captain Dr. .... from Freiburg leading with his good example. Everything was in splendid order. The Priest and his congregation closely watched this spectacle, which to them appeared extraordinary. The soldiers marched out of the Church when service was over. When I came into the Sacristy, the Priest looked at me in a strange way, but said nothing and went to the communion rails to read out the list of Masses for the following week: every Monday, Mass for the soldiers in the field; every Tuesday, a Holy Mass for those who have fallen, etc. etc.

Then he continued, with raised voice, and this was the trend of his discourse: "My dear children, I shall not keep you long here, as the German soldiers have preached you a sermon. The Germans are our enemies, it is true, but a people, men, soldiers, who led by their officers sanctify the Sunday by enthusiastically singing hymns, reception of the holy Sacraments, who proclaim themselves Catholics before the whole world by their piety and conduct—such a people commands our admiration and makes us sad when we think of our own condition. Poor France, once so great and now so humbled! No, we must not grumble, nor complain that God chastises France with the dreadful scourge of war. We must try to bear this punishment in patience, and imitate the example given us by the German nation, we must go back to the God of our fathers, then God will bless France again." This is the tenor, which reigns in this neighbourhood among the Priest and those of his Parishioners who are still good.

*(Augsburger Postzeitung, 12<sup>th</sup> December 1914.)*

## 2. From the Eastern Seat of War.

### A Birthday Celebration in the Field on Totensonntag.

My dear parents,

A birthday in the field! What feelings crop up in one, it is hardly to be believed and yet quite natural. Dead-Sunday! How many mothers and wives will shed bitter tears at home to-day, and how many of them are waiting with anxious hearts for news of their dear ones, who are in the field. Still it seems to me that it cannot be Totensonntag. This Sunday means for me a day of life. Certainly many a dear comrade is lying in foreign soil, still I cannot think that I am to end my young life here. How often have I been in danger of death and yet I am lucky enough to be able to celebrate my birthday. I look on it as a good sign, that I can begin my 24<sup>th</sup> year in the enemy's country, and I am confident that I shall be able to celebrate my birthday very often. So you see, dear parents, you need not worry about me, although just to-day—this day devoted to the Dead—certainly gives one some cause for sadness.

Outside deep stillness reigns. The bright winter sun streams in at our window, brightening everything in its liquid gold. It is very cold and the snow crunches under our feet. A real Sunday morning in winter, like at home.

It seems as if the cruel war will not disturb the peace of the Dead to-day. Not a shot is to be heard, it is really solemn—but now something else. To-day, when I got up, (of course I was the last) my room-mates congratulated me, then I changed my shirt, washed, and went to coffee. At home there was always a vase of flowers, all kinds of cake etc. on the table, to-day we had black and bitter coffee and stale dry bread. Yet we were all in the best humour and nature helped us to look at things from their good sides. When we had chatted for about an hour, I went over to the musicians, who at once invited me to partake of their breakfast. There I got coffee with milk and sugar, and bread with butter, sausage and ham. The dear fellows did everything in their power to give me a birthday breakfast—we have just heard here that Belgium is making overtures for peace. Can it really be true?—Erich Böhl, Günther, Witzigs have all congratulated me. I was delighted to get these welcome lines. I have not yet got the parcel from Güllzows or Frau Konsistorialrat Kessler.

To-day, 23<sup>rd</sup> November, I will continue to tell you of the rest of my birthday celebration. In the afternoon about 3:30, Huth, Wenneis, two other musicians and I went as a Quartet with several grenadiers to the churchyard. There we found the grave of our fallen comrades already very nicely decorated. Our Quartet sang some beautiful songs. Then we went home, where we made good coffee and had “Schmalzstullen” with sausage and ham, all gifts

presented by my dear comrades. Towards evening then we had a little birthday festivity in the musician's quarters. I had got two bottles of white wine, and by chance the buglers had got some Claret. We made a splendid punch with the Claret, the white wine we drank as it was. At the end two other comrades came, the secretary of the company, and a corporal, who gave me valuable presents: cigars, one pocket-handkerchief, three candles, sugar, and a sergeant from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Garde-Regiment z. Z. Barrenbeck, half a pound of butter. That was really splendid! I passed round my cigars, cigarettes and tobacco, and the visitors also brought something to smoke and a torch. The latter was put on a helmet and gave us the most splendid fary-like illumination. Our singers sang their best songs. Wenneis recited some of his own poems and got teased and laughed at. He then made a very nice speech in my honour, from which I have seen what a favorite I am with all these dear fellows. On Tuesday I shall probably be sent to the front, and I could hear from W... 's words, how sorry they are to lose me. I am sure that a commanding General cannot have such a birthday celebration.

We were ten in all, in a small warm room with one window, the walls decorated with pictures, cut out of the illustrated papers. In the middle a round table, and round this, sitting on chairs and the one bed, we old warriors. The room was magically lighted by the light of the torch and candles the table covered with the helmets which served as torch stands, candles, wine bottles, cigar and cigarette boxes, cups, pipes, matches, and some books. Oh, I had nearly forgotten the principal thing, a box with ginger-bread, quite splendid. This birthday celebration will never be forgotten by me and I think I can say the same for my comrades. In the midst of war such a beautiful festivity. I need not add, dear parents, how often my thoughts wandered to »you. When we parted for the night at 12·30, a beautiful clear, starlit heaven was to be seen. At first I could not sleep, as Wenneis's words kept running through my brain. But at last I fell asleep and rested till 8·30 a. m. without feeling cold. Now I am again with the musicians. Everyone is writing letters. Dear parents, I have just heard from Pabusch that on 30<sup>th</sup> November and 6<sup>th</sup> December all kinds of parcels will be brought to the front in automobiles. Perhaps you will take advantage of this opportunity. I hope this descriptive account of my birthday celebration will please you, and that you did not sit at home with sad thoughts, but were gay, just as I was. Father can keep on sending me newspapers, I can always use them. Now I shall close, hoping these lines will find you well. Heaps of love and kisses from your grateful boy.

(Written by the Attendant's son in M. Berge's office.)

## How we cut the Russian Ring.

V . . . . . near . . . . . 27<sup>th</sup> November.

. . . . I consider myself lucky at being able to send you greetings to-day. Yesterday, the day before yesterday, and the day before that, I had drawn several thick lines under my life's account. Now I shall, I can look upon a new period of life.

The days which have passed, have been very exciting, gruesome and threatening, but they were days, on which the Division earned eternal honour. Fate had laid her heavy hand upon us, and under its pressure, all the husks of our souls were lifted: and the core laid bare. There each soldier could be seen at his own worth. Thank Heaven, the number of courageous men was so much greater than that of the weaklings. The luck was with the courageous soldiers; we were victorious over an enemy, the excess of whose numerical superiority was only recognized by most of us, when decided. The hostile army at Łódz, where the Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolajewitsch is said to have been, has been closed in by us. If we had had sufficient time, we should have succeeded in destroying the whole army; our ring was thin, but of hard metal. In recognition of the position, an aeroplane was sent from Łódz to Warsaw, in order to secure help for the oppressed Russians. At Rzondowe the airman came down, within the range of our troops, thinking that he had found the Russian auxiliary corps. The information which we derived from this incited us to hurry as much as we could. The next day we arrived in Wiskitno, which is quite near the town of Łódz. We could see the chimneys of the town, which stood out like huge signs of exclamation on the flat landscape. Our guns proclaimed themselves like the trombones on the Last Day. News-men from Łódz, whom we stopped recently, as their leaving the besieged city roused our suspicions, informed us that whole rows of streets had been destroyed, as well as the bridges and electric works. Thousands of soldiers and peaceful inhabitants have been killed. In their rage at our enormous success the Russians attacked the Jews, killing thirty or forty, because they looked upon them as our friends and assistants.

Last Saturday's glorious sunset was spoiled by the curling wreaths of smoke which ascended above the town of Łódz. If the Grand Duke were really there, the Russians could not dare think of coming to any arrangements with us, much as many of them might have wished to, in their need. But without help from outside, it was not possible for them to think of coming out of their trap. Communication with Warsaw was an absolute necessity. When it had grown dark, we saw curious steep, wide and narrow strips of light cutting through the clouds. They remained quite stationary above the glowing flames, which the shells appeared to have caused.

But none of us were quite confident that it was ordinary fire, or inadvertent reflexion. We remembered the remarkable "Comets," which we had seen near Zarki. What, if there were now six or seven of these comets before or above us? There was no doubt about it, the besieged had used light signals to communicate with the approaching auxiliary troops.

Freshly equipped Siberian troops, who had travelled 29 days, in well-heated railway trains, enveloped in furs, across ice and snow, had been unloaded in Skierniewice and were marching towards Rawa in the South, and some places through which we had passed in the North. On Sunday, we received some rather disquieting reports. Brzezina, where our wounded had been left, was said to be occupied by the Russians, our line of retreat cut off, we were surrounded. At the same time news which we had been expected from columns, had not arrived, the reception of which was of vital importance for us.... An adjutant had ridden 40 km.—at full speed—to bring these important, but disquieting reports from the neighbouring corps to Excellenz. Excellenz replied: "I think, we shall be victorious. Who dares talk to me here of retreat, losses of towns and columns? What has been lost, must only be re-captured." This was the trend of our General's conversation. But in spite of it, a depression and meanness overcame a great many, which we tried to disperse—whenever we had nothing more important to do—by entering into conversation with comrades whom we knew and some whom we did not know, by talking to them of home, the past, and the future.

By a trick of Fate it happened that just on these days friends and relations saw each other, who did not know that there was a chance of meeting here. Conversations with above had put me in a better mood. Our column, waiting for an order, camped on the open field in a very wintry temperature. From hour to hour we waited for the order to set off in the direction from which we had come the day before. In the evening, when our feet had almost turned to icicles, we got orders to march back to W..., our former quarter. On arrival there, we had to wait patiently in the street, until the troops who were in the village and had got fresh orders, had passed, and had set out on their march. I cannot say that we got much rest. We had to get up very early next morning and were attached to a line of carts, several kilometers in length, which brought us towards the South East. We gave up the idea of keeping the Russians in Lodz and tried on our side to break through the Russian ring. The march continued in perfect order. We were not followed very far, so our first care was to get rid of the enemy that was approaching from Rawa. Besides our own carts, guns, and provisions, we had to take along 6,000 prisoners and captured war material. But the wounded were our greatest care, as they had been laid on carts and were groaning and screaming at the jolts, which the frozen and rutty road in-

cessantly caused. Some of them died on the way and were buried by the road side. About midday we had reached the Staff, which was quite near the new battlefield. The fighting was raging. Our carts were placed on the decline of a hill at the edge of a wood, in hundreds. A ring of rifles emerges from the wood—lies down—fires—jumps up—hurries forward—lies down again; a fresh ring comes forward. What now took place, I can hardly describe. All the carts turn and rattle down the hill—screaming, running, general confusion! At last a loud "Halt!" is heard. The carts cannot be brought to a standstill at once, some one with great presence of mind gave commands in a loud clear voice, as I had advised beforehand. "Everyone who has a gun or rifle, to the front!" It does not take me long to look for my gun, it is loaded and ready. I hurry forward, in a few moments a company has been formed, an officer leading. We hurry past seven dead cannoniers towards the edge of the wood. The Russians are put to flight, in troops we scour the woods. We are on a real battlefield; but I shall refrain from giving you a description of it. After an hour we have taken 60—70 Russians prisoners, without firing a shot. Owing to the twilight coming on, I had not seen that my comrades from the Staff had left the straggling entrenchments to return to the baggage line which was being defended, having accomplished their task. I remained with the company and marched on till we came to a space in the wood, over which the hostile shrapnels burst in dozens. Here we met several companies of the "Maikäfer" and the... regiments. I was attached to the first company of this regiment and we proceeded as quietly as possible in the dark. Soon the moon rose, we passed a Russian gun which had been left standing, and in two lanes machine guns which ours had set up... The enemy had retreated further and further. The attack on the baggage had been carried out by an advanced Russian company; now we seemed to be approaching the concentrated hostile troops. After some time we get orders to halt, as we had proceeded several kilometers towards the North East. Quite unexpectedly, suddenly the bullets come whizzing along. The experienced fellows with whom I have marched, lay down at once on the ground, their faces buried in the snow-covered moss. After 10 minutes the firing ceases—another 5 minutes and we hear a loud Hurrah! in front of us, our comrades are attacking. The joyful shouts do not cease. A cornet signal is heard and again we get the command Halt! But the shouts still continue. When all is quiet, we get up and march, side guns forward. All this is repeated several times, till we reach the highway. The horses echelon of our Staff was here. The officer, with whom I had been chatting on the way about the whole situation and I part. Fighting was finished for this day. We had fought the railway crossing and the march through the wood. We spent the night in the village through which we had to pass, as night came on and we had no other

orders. In cold small rooms we waited for orders to proceed, but they only arrived long after dawn. An estafette brought us the news that one brigade of our division had succeeded in reaching and storming the town of B... during the night. With that, the Fate of our division was decided, we were in touch with the troops stationed in the North and the retreat was now safe. Besides this the enemy was defeated, thousands of prisoners having fallen into our hands.

(*Kreuzzeitung, December 9, 1914.*)

### 3. From the Fleet.

#### S. M. Submarine U...

12<sup>th</sup> October 1914.

Dear Mother,

Thank God, we are back here again. For four days we could neither change our clothes nor wash, hardly having time for a meal, and sea-sick all the time, except for the first day—but the worst of it was—all for nothing. That is what makes one mad. We work hard and our nerves get unstrung, but the English are never there, where we go to look for them, not even when we scour the whole North Sea. We always spend some hours of the night... metres below the sea level so as to get some rest.

Last night the sea was so high that we had to go down... metres, but after 6 hours came up again, as with the pressure at this depth one of our funnels was crushed in like a tin box. There was such a crack in the boat, that we all jumped out of our berths, and at first were not certain whether we would come up again or not. The first minutes were anxious ones, till we knew what had happened, as we could have held out three days if we could not come up at once. I can imagine a more agreeable situation.

Now we are having a day's rest for repairs and when the torpedos are in order, we start off again. The weather is better to-day, I hope it will remain so, at least for a few days. Sea-faring is horrid in such small boats when the weather is stormy.

Many thanks for your letter, which I received to-day. There is no need to send me anything, as we are splendidly equipped and there is no want of food. I wanted to send you two live lobsters the other day, but the post would not accept them. You see we live here like princes—lobster costs Mk. 1·20 a pound.

I find it is very nice that Portugal has declared war on us, these fellows have very good colonies. I think you worry too much about us. If we get into a hot situation, we just go down to the bottom and leave the others to stare their eyes out after us. As long as we are not surprised in a fog or have a burst, everything is all right. At any rate, as long as we keep clear of the mines....

14<sup>th</sup> October 1914.

I was interrupted writing this, the day before yesterday, as we had to put out to sea suddenly for a few hours to hunt an English submarine, which of course had got off beforehand. Yesterday I was busy all day. We got the report from U... that the Russian cruiser "Pallade" with a torpedo was sunk in 3 minutes. If only the boats that are still out could destroy a few of the English. We see from all the measures, which the British Admiralty has taken, that they are dead afraid of boats of our U-class, and do not feel safe anywhere. The whole English coast is full of mines and yet we try to get through. I should just like to know where our 60 English colleagues are hiding. What cowards the fellows are! Please be good enough to write how much money you have of mine, as long as the war lasts the Staatskasse in Kiel will send Mk. 150.— on the first of each month.

S. M. Submarine U..., 18<sup>th</sup> October 1914.

Dear Mother,

I have only a few minutes time to write, but want to let you know that we put out to sea to-morrow to do some work which may last some time. We shall probably start about 4 a.m. I have a thousand things to do, and must see that my torpedoes are in order. We expect to be out about a fortnight, so I shall not be able to write to you. I tell you this now, so that you will not be uneasy at getting no news from me. I hope I shall be able to get the Iron Cross—as soon as we have done our job, we come back again. I shall give you news as soon as possible.

### A Farewell-letter from S. M. S. "Nürnberg."

The following sailor's letter, which has now reached his relations in Berlin, has been placed at our disposal:—

Valparaiso, 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1914.

My dear Parents and Sisters!

Last night we have been under fire for the first time, off the heights of Valparaiso. Two English armoured cruisers "Good Hope" and "Monmouth" were sunk. The latter received the last blow from us. An auxiliary cruiser and the small cruiser "Glasgow" escaped damaged.

The weather was very bad, but that is nothing unusual near Cape Horn, and when the giant sank with its red keel upward in front of us, a gruesome feeling came over me.

Well, we are soldiers and have done our duty. None of our men have been wounded and of the whole squadron only the "Gneisenau" was hit. This is hardly to be credited, but it is a fact.

To-day we arrived at Valparaiso.

Beloved ones at home, keep healthy and happy. Here we have still much work to do. A happy Christmas to you all and to you, my dear father, the heartiest congratulations and best wishes for your birthday.

Try not to think too much of your eldest son by degrees, but do not forget him altogether. With best love and gratitude, I send you all my best and heartiest greetings

Your son and brother Albert,  
Volunteer on Board S. M. S. "Nürnberg"  
called the "Spectreship."

(*Berliner Lokalanzeiger, 17<sup>th</sup> December 1914.*)

## 4. From the Air Fleet.

### A Battle in the Air.

A Berlin author, who has been on service in France as an aviator, since the beginning of the war, and who took part in the air battle over A..... in which 3 French aviators were forced to descend, sends the following field post letter, with an account of this battle, in which we were victorious, to his native country:—

We are still here in C..... where we have made ourselves quite comfortable. The inhabitants of this little place are bearing the German invasion tolerably well and we have everything we need; only a bottle of good German beer would sometimes be quite welcome. During the last couple of weeks the weather has been absolutely horrible, rain and fog, and for a change now and then snow with squalls, so as to give us an opportunity of getting well acquainted with sea-sickness. But in spite of this we keep on flying and try to make life as disagreeable as possible for the French.

Recently we had an engagement with them in the air, which will never be forgotten by all those who took part in it. Two French battle-aeroplanes were shot down by us and another forced to descend. This happened as follows:—

Lately the French aeroplanes, which have great respect for our guns—but in spite of which I must give them credit for great pluck—courageously ventured to fly over our lines. They came oftener than we liked. Finally we organized a good guard station, from where we always received information in good time, when hostile steel-birds were approaching. One day we were informed that a squadron consisting of five machines was approaching towards A.... We at once got our aeroplanes ready to start. The motors began whizzing, in spite of the wet weather, and in intervals of half a minute our squadron started off under the leadership of

Captain ..... We took the course towards A..... and at once rose to a great height, as it was our intention to make the enemy remember us this time. We were of course provided with ammunition "up to the teeth," besides which our bombs and machine guns were not to be left unused. Near A..... we saw the French crossing in an open line, the bi-planes and a single deck monoplane were buzzing about to find out what they could. As we kept flying as near together as possible, they did not notice the strength of our squadron and rushed towards our "Taube" which was leading. But the "Taube" first made an elegant curve as if to descend, then rose and sent a greeting to the nearest machine which seemed to have hit the propeller of the French bi-plane, as from my machine we could see the enemy going down in a normal gliding flight. In the meantime we had come into position and now the fight began, one machine against the other. The French did all they could to get over us in order to attack us from above, but we were on our guard and continually kept in pace with them. Lieutenant M..... who was flying about 500 m to my left, had just finished off his opponent splendidly. I saw the Frenchman, who seemed to have been badly hit, shooting down like an arrow. In this way the second was finished off. Now my companion's and my turn came. A powerful bi-plane shot at us incessantly and the bullets pierced the planes more than once, but he was yet to meet his Fate. My companion telegraphed me with his arms "Sharp to the left!" Our machine rolled to one side, almost vertically, and in this position our machine guns began to give forth their wellknown music. The enemy kept up for one or two seconds, then his machine began to roll, jerked upwards and turning a somersault, fell to the ground. When we looked up, the last two enemies were in full flight. Now they began to shoot at us from below, and of course we had to give them a reply. We ascended a little and then threw some bombs on A....., which we could see with our glasses, had a splendid effect. The gas works were blown up first, then the two railway stations hit and destroyed. In short, we had a successful day and our squadron was very pleased with the work it had done. Unfortunately one of our comrades was forced to come down, but still our victory over the French was complete. I got the Iron Cross for this flight.

(*Berliner Tageblatt, 17<sup>th</sup> December, 1914.*)

